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## THE USE OF MODERN LANGUAGE PLACEMENT TESTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

(*Author's summary.*—A study of those taking placement tests in modern languages shows the overlapping and deviation from national norms as well as the wide range of achievement among those presenting the same number of units of preparatory training. Placement according to achievement in the tests is vastly superior to and has proven more valid than the old system.)

THE subject of modern foreign language placement tests at the University of Pittsburgh is one in which I take an almost "god-motherly" interest because I feel that my regular trips to the "wailing wall" in the pre-testing days had their share in bringing about what we believe is Reform.

### CONDITIONS BEFORE THE USE OF TESTS FOR PLACEMENT

When I came to Pitt as Graduate Assistant in 1925-26, University language courses here as in general, I imagine, were still predicated upon a pre-war situation. Then modern languages had not been so widely offered nor so generally popular, and the relatively small number of students must have made a more homogeneous group, altho I understand there was great over-lapping.

After the war the sudden increased demand for languages in secondary schools was met often enough by a supply of teachers inadequately prepared. Too, the recognition that living languages should be spoken as well as read, had further complicated conditions by introducing new aims and methods which were often wrongly interpreted and incompetently applied.

Third semester classes in French and Spanish were for us in those days the melting pot which tried all the effort and patience of class and instructor. It was not extraordinary to find, in a group of 30 or more, as many varieties of preparation or lack of it as there

were individuals in the class. German, I believe, had not such a serious problem, as at that time most German students began their preparation in the University.

Our system of placement was one still widely prevalent—two semesters of secondary school preparation was considered equivalent to one semester of college work, the old emphasis upon credits rather than attainment. Our own students often felt the disadvantage, after two semesters of three classes a week, of competing with good students well prepared in four semesters of five classes weekly. On the other hand, some secondary school entrants, pushed on beyond their actual achievement, or barely passed, were an awful obstacle.

To further qualify conditions as "impossible," the preparation of some had been confined to one year or two at periods five to eight years remote! Some transfers with advanced standing, after engaging in teaching or other occupations, came in to complete their degree work. Others had been out of school for a period after high school graduation.

We *could* and *did* advise advancement for those of superior attainment; we advised those seriously handicapped to go back to a level fitting their preparation, but the great bugaboo for these latter was "loss of credits." Usually they elected to stand firmly on their rights and privileges of entrance, hoping by the end of the semester to have established themselves by tremendous effort, or to have touched the instructor's sympathy for a passing grade.

#### PRELIMINARIES TO TEST APPLICATION FOR PLACEMENT

To obviate this, legislation by the faculty, on recommendation from the Department, made it possible for a student, even though he had offered language for entrance, to enter the class which fitted his level, and thence to complete the language requirements without loss of credit.

The effort of Dr. Ben Wood and of the Modern Foreign Language study had by this time completed a battery of objective and standardized tests, and here at the University, the new Department of Research in Higher Education under the supervision of Dr. W. B. Jones furnished the adequate machinery for testing. Freshmen of 1928 and 1929 were subjected to standardized tests. (Columbia Research Bureau in French, German, and Spanish.)

With a follow-up study of class achievement as measured by teachers' grades, Mr. Iffert of the Research Department and Professor Shelton, of the French Department, established norms which were revised in the light of experience, and adjusted when actual testing for placement was begun.

#### TESTING FOR PLACEMENT

*The tests.*—The tests finally chosen for placement and first used for that purpose the second semester of 1929-30, and applied to each succeeding incoming class, were the American Council Alpha (French); the Columbia Research Bureau (German); and the Stanford (Spanish). They are regularly scheduled as one of the events of Freshman Week.

*Purpose.*—The purpose of testing was (a) by scientific classification to create more homogeneous groups; (b) thus to allow a raising and maintenance of standards and to reduce "mortality"; (c) to afford a fairer opportunity for each student, at the level suited to his attainment, to realize his best development; (d) to raise "morale" in general: (1) to avoid uneconomic returns and to make possible a more effective expenditure of effort; (2) to improve conditions for the teacher; (3) to remove the student of average or superior capacity from the deadening effect of a position where his ambition and effort could not be rightly challenged and rewarded; (4) to give the less fit in capacity or achievement the best possible opportunity to find themselves, and to develop their powers to the fullest without overwhelming and stultifying them with a sense of helpless inferiority.

#### STUDY OF THE RESULTS OF PLACEMENTS TESTS

*Purpose of this study.*—The purpose of my study is (a) to check upon the results of Placement Tests; (b) to determine to what extent they are necessary and justified; (c) to determine whether any revision in norms is necessary; (d) to study the correlation between placement scores, teachers' grades, psychology percentiles, etc.; (e) to determine correlations between different parts of the test, and that between different skills and achievement as measured by grades; (f) to compare grade distribution, for the sections affected, of a period before Placement with those of the present, to check for reduction of failure; (g) to determine extent and de-

viation from national norms in the different skills; (h) to furnish data which may be of worth to teachers preparing University entrants, and which may help to a closer harmony of objectives; (i) to put the tests to a diagnostic application—to show up weakness in separate skills for the group and individuals and to pave the way for remedial measures; (j) to study the use of the tests for prediction.

In September, 1931, the French tests were administered to 176 subjects. For a "control" we shall continue the old system of placement which considered 2 semesters or 1 year of secondary school preparation as equivalent to 1 semester of University work. Accordingly, a pupil who enters a second semester University class after 2 semesters' preparation in high school, is "normally" placed. The pupil presenting 4 semesters' high school preparation enters French III (third semester) etc. It follows that a freshman offering "odd" semester preparation—3, 5, or 7—will necessarily be advanced or demoted the equivalent of a University half-semester.

*Placement.*—Of the 176 tested, only 75, less than 43 per cent were "normally placed." Fifty-four were advanced (of these, 12 by  $\frac{1}{2}$  semester) so that there were advanced by 1 University semester or more, 42. Forty-seven were retarded (of these, 5 by  $\frac{1}{2}$  semester) so that there were retarded by 1 semester or more, 42. There were demoted to French I, so that their previous preparation was a total loss for placement, 17, of which 9 had studied 4 semesters; 1, 3 semesters; and 7, 2 semesters in high school. In the case of 7 of this group, a lapse of from 2 to 4 semesters since their last registration in French may have affected their placement.

Of the 176 tested, only 91 continued in University French classes the first semester of 1931-32. Some elected to begin other languages, many were pre-medical or pre-dental students whose prescribed block schedules did not allow for language in the first semester. Others, no doubt, because of schedule difficulties, or other reasons, decided to defer language study.

Of the 91, 4 withdrew before the end of the semester: 1 because of health; 1 withdrew from school; 2 withdrew because the pace was too stiff. One of these who had placed in French II after private tutoring (30 weeks with a grade of 95 per cent outside the University) withdrew to French I where he made the grade of D.



Eighty-seven, then, continued as placed throughout the semester. Of these, 32, less than 37 per cent, were "normally" placed; 42 were advanced; 13, retarded. Two who were advanced—1 by  $\frac{1}{2}$  semester, 1 by 1 semester—because of schedule conflict, elected to remain in the lower section where they made grades of C+ and B respectively.

Only 3 of the group demoted to French I continued, and all received the grade of C.

#### COMPARISON OF GRADES OF DIFFERENT GROUPS

Semester grades recorded for placement students in French showed 7 A's (8 per cent); 27 B's (31 per cent); 44 C's (50.57 per cent); 8 D's (9.19 per cent); 1 F (1.1 per cent). The group which was advanced registered\* 5 A's (12.5 per cent); 13 B's (32.5 per cent); 21 C's (52.5 per cent); 1 D (2.5 per cent); 0 F. The retarded group: 0 A's; 2 B's (15.3 per cent); 9 C's (69.2 per cent); 1 D (7.69 per cent); 1 F (7.69 per cent). The "normally" placed: 2 A's (6.2 per cent); 11 B's (34.3 per cent); 13 C's (40.6 per cent); 6 D's (18.7 per cent); 0 F.

While a skewing of the curves may indicate too high grading, their relation seems to justify the placements. The group advanced seems to vindicate itself as superior, while those retarded certainly did not belong at upper levels.

It is obvious what a heterogeneous group they would have made, placed by the old system.

The one D in the advanced group was advanced only  $\frac{1}{2}$  semester, and that after the student had been out of school for a year.

The F in the retarded group had been demoted  $1\frac{1}{2}$  University semesters. Reference to the complete record showed a high school failure in French, with University semester grades in other subjects of C, D, WF (withdrawn failing) C, P, and a notation of "probation" for the second semester.

As has been indicated, the tests were not used for prognosis, but only as an objective measure of attainment at a given time for placement purposes.

When the student is once placed, individual differences, capacities, adjustments, motivations, home conditions, etc., will tend to

\* Apparent discrepancy in numbers due to omission of grades of 2 who remained in lower sections.

vary achievement results. More than this, semester grading is bound to be somewhat subjective.

Apart from this, some of the lower scores among the "advanced" group may be partially accounted for by lesser skills in the oral and aural phases of the work. These, while not measured by the placement tests, reflect themselves in final grades.

#### CORRELATION BETWEEN ACHIEVEMENT IN FRENCH AND OTHER SUBJECTS

An interesting correlation between French grades and other University grades was apparent in the highest and lowest groups.

The 7 A students registered (including French) 18 A's, 8 B's, 9 C's, 1 D, 3 P's<sup>1</sup>, 1 F<sup>2</sup>.

The 9 D-F students recorded 0 A's, 3 B's, 22 C's, 16 D's, 7 P's<sup>3</sup>, 3 F's, 1 WF.

#### CORRELATION WITH OTHER SCORES

A significant correlation is apparent between the achievement of the A and D-F groups, and their Psychological Percentiles determined by the American Council on Education, Psychological Examination given to all freshmen.

The percentile range for the former group is 99.5 to 49; for the latter, 66 to 21.

A's	99.5,	97.7,	95.4,	92,	80,	61,	49,
D-F's	66,	64,	57,	43,	40,	33,	21, 21.

The last high school grade in French recorded for the A group was in every case A, but the D-F group had received 2 D's, 5 C's, 84 per cent and 92 per cent.

#### TESTS FOR PREDICTION

An indication of the reliability of the tests for prediction is apparent in a study of 40 cases. Raw scores in the various skills transmuted into percentiles, and the composite percentile translated into letter grades according to the Alpha test system were compared with semester grades given by instructors quite independ-

<sup>1</sup> Pass in Physical Education.

<sup>2</sup> In Physical Education.

<sup>3</sup> Physical Education.

ently of placement findings. For 4, the placement grade E indicated "condition or failure." To save this, all were demoted: 3 to French I where they made C; 1 to French II where the grade was F. Sixteen received the same letter grade for placement and the semester. Thirteen raised the grade by 1 letter, normal enough if they were rightly adjusted, and meeting increased demands by increased effort. Six raised the grade by 2 letters; 1, by 3. A check on these latter two groups showed for a part, something in background preparation—semester lapse, evening school, excessive activities, etc., which might have lowered achievement. Others had had greater motivation in University work or psychology percentiles indicated more ability than had previously been made effective.

#### OVERLAPPING AND DEFICIENCIES AMONG THE GROUPS TESTED

Reference to the charts will reveal the tremendous overlapping within groups offering 2, 4, and 6 semesters preparatory training in French.

For those with 4 semesters—the largest group—the range of achievement in each of the 4 parts of the test was from above the national norm for 8 semesters to below that for 1.

Of 95 cases, 76 were below the national norm for their semester in Grammar; 66 below that in Vocabulary; 55 below that in Silent Reading; and 48 below the national median for 1 semester in Composition, with 28 above that for 4 semesters.

My discussion has confined itself to results in French which has to do with the largest and most representative number. Attention to German and Spanish shows in general the same problems and the same trends. There may be occasion for revision of norms in German, but that study has not progressed far enough to be reliable.

My whole report, dealing as it does with insufficient figures, and based on a study begun in February, does not pretend to be a conclusive statistical analysis nor to offer highly valid results. It tries rather to indicate trends and to show what we are attempting, on the basis of measurable skills, to better conditions in a field of subjects traditionally recognized as "cultural," increasingly demanded and appreciated as a tool for research in other fields, and in which our perhaps prejudiced opinion holds that there are, among what we call "higher values," those which are immeasurable.

DEVIATIONS FROM NATIONAL A.C. ALPHA NORMS OF 95 ENTRANTS OF SEPTEMBER, 1931, WHO HAD STUDIED FRENCH FOUR SEMESTERS

VOCABULARY PLACEMENT

National Norms for Semesters 1-8								
No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1								
3								
2								
2								
3								
15								
3								
19								
3								
17								
9								
13								
4								
95	66 Below			3	26 Above			

Vertical lines indicate National Norm for semester indicated. Horizontals bear number of entrants, and indicate levels at which they placed.

Key—4 placed below the norm for 1 sem.

9 at the norm for 2 sem.

1 beyond the norm for 8 sem.

GRAMMAR PLACEMENT

National Norms for Semesters								
No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3								
2								
1								
1								
4								
6								
2								
13								
6								
27								
4								
21								
1								
4								
95	76 Below			2	17 Above			

Charts show overlapping and deviation from the nationally established Norms in Vocabulary and Grammar for 95 students entering after 4 semesters study in secondary schools.

DEVIATIONS FROM NATIONAL A.C. ALPHA NORMS OF 95 ENTRANTS OF SEPTEMBER, 1931, WHO HAD STUDIED FRENCH FOUR SEMESTERS

SILENT READING PLACEMENT

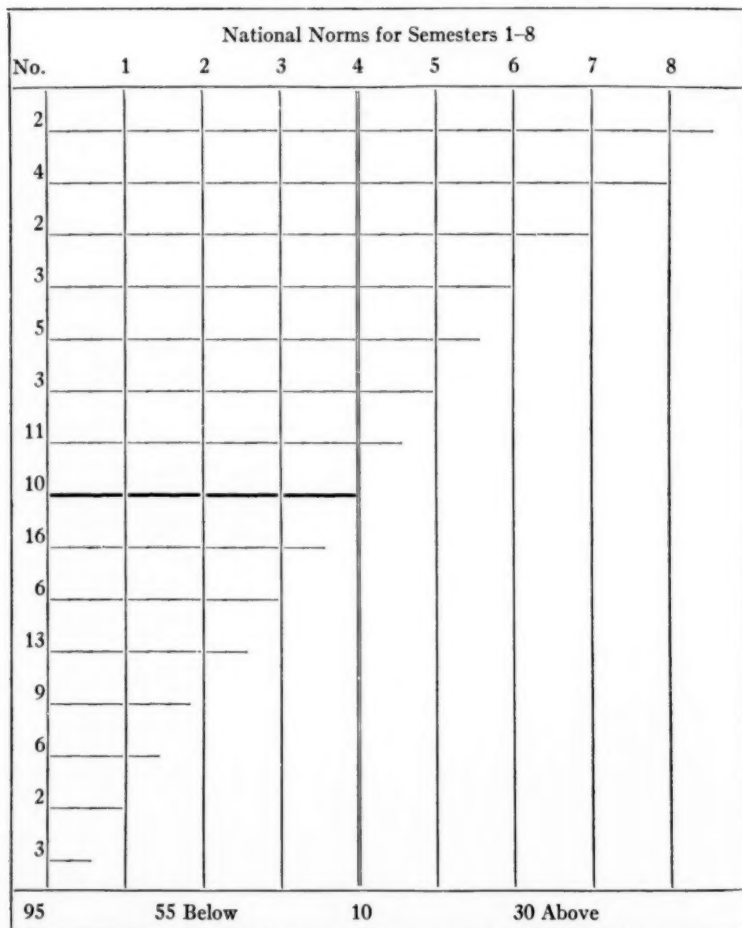


Chart indicates that of 95 students examined, 40 placed at or above the National Norm for their group—(4 sem.) 16 more were above the norm for 3 sem. 33 were below the norm for 3 sem., while 3 were below that for 1 sem.

The relatively better showing in this skill is probably due to a greater emphasis by teachers influenced by the Coleman Report.

*Composition*

28 above the national median for 4 sem.

11 between those for 2 and 3 sem.

8 between those for 1 and 2 sem.

48 below the national median for 1 sem.



DEVIATIONS FROM NATIONAL A.C. ALPHA NORMS OF 17 EN-  
TRANTS OF SEPTEMBER, 1931, WHO HAD STUDIED 2  
SEMESTERS.\*

<i>Vocabulary</i>	<i>Grammar</i>	<i>Silent Reading</i>	<i>Composition</i>
1 at 4 sem. median	1 between 3 & 4	1 at 4	All below 1 sem.
5 between 2 & 3	4 above 2	1 above 3	median except
2 between 1 & 2	3 at 2	1 at 3	3 who were <i>high</i>
3 at 1 sem. median	7 between 1 & 2	2 above 2	scores, and 1
6 below 1	2 below 1	2 at 2	who was above
		3 above 1	1 sem. median
		1 at 1	
		6 below 1	

\* 41% of this group demoted to French I.

With 3 exceptions, all who had had any semester lapse between preparatory work and college entrance were demoted.

17.6% of the group was advanced by placement.

41% Normally placed.

DEVIATIONS FROM NATIONAL A.C. ALPHA NORMS OF 11 EN-  
TRANTS OF SEPTEMBER, 1931, WHO HAD STUDIED  
FRENCH 6 SEMESTERS

VOCABULARY PLACEMENT

National Norms for Semesters 1-8								
No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
*1								
2								
1								
1								
3								
1								
1								
†1								
11	6 Below 6 Sem. Nat. Norm					5 Above		

\* 1 student a special case—had lived 2 years in Switzerland.

† Student X.

## GRAMMAR PLACEMENT

National Norms for Semesters 1-8								
No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
*4								
1								
1								
1								
1								
1								
1								
1								
†1								
11	5 Below					6 Above		

## SILENT READING PLACEMENT

National Norms for Semesters 1-8								
No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
*3								
2								
1								
1								
2								
1								
†1								
11	5 Below					6 Above		

\* 1 student a special case—had lived 2 years in Switzerland.

† Student X.

Charts show over-lapping and deviation from the nationally established norms in Vocabulary, and Silent Reading for 11 students who had studied French for 6 semesters.

This group might be expected to represent the survival of the fittest!

FRENCH TESTS FOR PLACEMENT, SEPTEMBER, 1931

No. Tested (106 f.; 70 m.).....	176
No. Secondary Schools (H.S. and private) represented....	81
No. of States .....	5

<i>No. of Sem. Preparation</i>	<i>No. of Entrants</i>
1	1
2	21
3	6
4	119
<hr/>	<hr/>
5	11
6	13
7	4
8	1

No. Normally Placed.....	75
No. Advanced.....	54
No. Retarded.....	47
(No. adv. 1 sem. or more.....	42)
(No. retarded 1 sem. or more.....	42)

<i>No. of U. Sem. Advanced</i>	<i>No. Advanced</i>
$\frac{1}{2}$	12
1	29
$1\frac{1}{2}$	2
2	9
$2\frac{1}{2}$	1
3	1

Gain in University semesters 61 $\frac{1}{2}$

<i>No. of U. Sem. Retarded</i>	<i>No. Retarded</i>
$\frac{1}{2}$	5
1	29
$1\frac{1}{2}$	2
2	11

Loss in University semesters 56 $\frac{1}{2}$

Net gain in University semesters 5

No. Demoted to French I

17

<i>No. of Sem. Preparation</i>	<i>No. Sem. Lapsed</i>	<i>No. Demoted</i>
2	0	2 (1*)
2	2	4
2	3	1*
3	0	1
4	0	6 (1*)
4	2	2
4	4	1

\* Entered French I Sept. 1931 and obtained semester grades of "C."

No. of 176 examined who continued French in the University the first semester of 1931-32. (91—4 who withdrew)..... 87

No. of the 87 advanced.....	42**
No. normally placed.....	32
No. retarded.....	13

\*\* Two of these, advanced 1 sem. and  $\frac{1}{2}$  sem. because of schedule difficulties, remained at the lower level and received grades of "B" and "C+" respectively.

Semester grades for 87 placement students in French:

A's	B's	C's	D's	F's
7	27	44	8	1
8%	31%	50.57%	9.19%	1.1%

Semester grades for 40 of 42 advanced (See note above on 2 who did not take advantage of advancement.):

A's	B's	C's	D's	F's
5	13	21	1	0
12.5%	32.5%	52.5%	2.5%	0%

Semester grades for 13 retarded:

A's	B's	C's	D's	F's
0	2	9	1	1
0%	15.3%	69.2%	7.69%	7.69%

Semester grades for 32 normally placed:

A's	B's	C's	D's	F's
2	11	13	6	0
6.2%	34.3%	40.6%	18.7%	0%

The group advanced seems to have justified the advancement. The 1 "D" was  $\frac{1}{2}$  semester advancement after a year out of school which was felt as a handicap.

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The retarded group apparently did not belong at higher levels. The "F" had been demoted 1½ University semesters. General academic record poor —probation the 2nd semester.

Comparison of the A group with the D-F group

A Group . . . . . 7		D-F Group . . . . . 9	
No. sem. adv.	No.	No. sem. adv.	No.
2	2	½	1
1½	1	0	6
1	1	No. Sem. Retarded	No.
½	1	**1½	1
*0	2	½	1

\* 1 had not had French for 1 sem.

\*\* 5 sem. preparation.

Correlation between French semester grades and general academic record for the two groups.

7 A students registered in subjects including French.

A's	B's	C's	D's	F's <sup>2</sup>	P's <sup>1</sup>
18	8	9	1	1	3

9 D-F students registered

A's	B's	C's	D's	F's	P's <sup>1</sup>	WF <sup>3</sup>
0	3	22	16	3	7	1

Comparison of Psychology Percentiles for same groups

A Group	99.5	97.7	95.4	92	80	61	49
D-F Group	66	64	57	43	40	33	21

Distribution of semester grades in French

All undergraduate campus classes 1st sem. 1929-30.

A's	B's	C's	D's	F's
18.9%	29.3%	34.7%	14.5%	2.3%

All undergraduate campus classes 1st sem. 1931-32

A's	B's	C's	D's	F's
15.3%	30%	39.2%	12.6%	2.0%

Reduction of Failure and D's.

<sup>1</sup> Pass in Ph.Ed.

<sup>2</sup> Physical Ed.

<sup>3</sup> Withdrawn failing

Campus classes 2-7 inclusive 1st sem. 1929-30.

<i>Before Placement</i>					
A's	B's	C's	D's	F's	*WF's
15.3%	30.3%	35%	15%	4.28%	

Campus classes 2-7 inclusive 1st sem. 1931-32.

<i>After Placement</i>				
A's	B's	C's	D's	F's
10.33%	32.5%	43.8%	12.39%	.82%

\* This doesn't tell the whole story, because in 1929-30 and before that there were a considerable number who *withdrew failing*. Classes 2-7 were compared because those are the sections which absorb most of the Freshman entrants who have studied the language in preparatory classes.

French Placements of September 1930.

No. placed and continuing	73
Advanced	23
Normally placed	33
Retarded	16
Special case—allowed ex. for adv. standing after study in foreign country	1
	73
Total gain in University sem. by 23 advanced	26
Total loss in University sem. by 16 retarded	19
	7

Advanced ½ sem.	2	Retarded ½ sem.	3
1 sem.	16	1 sem.	9
1½ sem.	2	1½ sem.	1
2 sem.	3	2 sem.	2
		3 sem.	1

Grades					
A's	B's	C's	D's	F's	W's
4	25	38	3	0	3

*German* (Columbia Research Bureau Test)

Placement test taken September 1931	31
No. Advanced	6
Normally placed	6
Retarded	19
	—
	31



Total gain by 6 in University semesters	5
Total loss by 19 in University semesters	26½
Net loss in University semesters	21½

No. continuing German study 1st sem. 1931-32	12
No. advanced	4
Normally placed	5
Retarded	3
Total gain by 4 in University semesters	3
Total loss by 3 in University semesters	2½
Net gain in University semesters	½

Semester grades of 12 placed September 1931

A's	B's	C's	D's	F's
6	2	4	0	0
50%	16.66%	33.33%		

No. of German students placed September 1930 and continuing study the 1st semester 1930-31. 8

No. advanced	2
Normally placed	2
Retarded	3
Total gain by 3 in University semesters	3
Total loss by 3 in University semesters	3

Semester grades of 8 placed September 1930.

A's	B's	C's	D's	F's
3	3	2	0	0
37.5%	37.5%	25%		

*Spanish* (Stanford Test)

No. took Placement Test September 1931	38
No. advanced	11
Normally placed	14
Retarded	13
Total gain by 11 in University semesters	10
Total loss by 13 in University semesters	13
Net loss in University semesters	3
No. continuing Sp. study 1st sem. 1931-32	17
No. advanced	7
Normally placed	6
Retarded	4
Total gain by 7 in University semesters	6
Total loss by 6 in University semesters	5½
Net gain in University semesters	½

No. of Spanish students placed September 1930 and continuing study the 1st semester 1930-31. 19

No. advanced	10
Normally placed	8
Retarded	1

1 who had been normally placed went back to lower level.

Grades				
A's	B's	C's	D's	F's
7	7	5	0	0

Achievement on American Council Alpha French Tests as prediction of achievement.

Comparison of composite percentiles translated to letter values according to the Alpha chart with University semester grades in French.

No. of cases compared	40
No. received same letter grade	16
No. placed at E (condition or failure). These were all demoted, 3 to Fr. I—grades all C; 1 to Fr. II—grade F	
No. raised grade 1 letter	13
*No. raised grade 2 letters	6
*No. raised grade 3 letters	1

\* Case study showed semesters lapsed between preparation and test, possible background handicap of excessive activities or evening school work, or special motivation or effort in College, or high psychology percentiles indicated superior ability.

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## THE TREATMENT OF VOCABULARIES IN TEXTBOOKS

*(Author's summary.—Each teacher has his own ideas about vocabularies. On the basis of simple logic not all can be right. Full and complete vocabularies have no place in texts beyond the first year. Attempts to corral practical, working vocabularies of a definite number of words held to be an objective of dubious merit.)*

**I**F DIVERGENCE in views means variety of aims, and if variety of aims is irrefutable proof of breadth, scope, and all the other intriguing possibilities of an educational enterprise, the study of German in the United States is enjoying at the present time unparalleled prosperity, recorded and potential; for the air is filled, if not actually beclouded, with opinions as to how success in the teaching of German may be achieved. That there is but meagre agreement along this line seems to be the source of anguish to no one, despite the irreducible fact that somebody is wrong when nobody agrees.

I personally agree with any teacher of German, from the grades to graduate work, who knows, and not merely believes, that the modern foreign language situation, or problem, is different in the United States from what it is in any other of the sixty-six countries of this world, who is endowed with a sufficient measure of intelligent fearlessness to admit that we should take our students into consideration first, and any technique we may have developed, however successful it may seem to be, second, and who is willing to grant that, apart from such cultural benefits as may result from reading real literature and the assembling of basic facts about some foreign people, ninety-five per cent of our usefulness lies in the giving to our students a reading knowledge of the foreign language in question. If this stand seems dogmatic, it is based on thirty years of experience as a teacher of German, during which time I have seen some really splendid results where the reading knowledge was held out and up as the prime goal to be reached, whereas I have never seen a non-German language student lift his ability to speak German up above the rank of miserable efficiency, so miserable that the student in question has far and above a hundred million competitors who can rout him into defeat with not even a conscious effort.

It is, all things considered, with a degree of uncommon hesita-

tion then that I add my own opinion as to a single phase of the teaching of German—the place of vocabularies in texts. It would never occur to me to do this were it not for the fact that our attitude toward vocabularies is, in my very own judgment, and I can follow no other, growing worse with the years. I shall confine myself to just a few recent commitments on the subject and to an even smaller number of recently compiled vocabularies. My thesis is simple: what is called “full” or “complete” vocabularies have no place at all in German texts.

In their *German Science Reader*<sup>1</sup> the authors state:

Years of classroom experience have convinced the authors that the average student rarely, if ever, refers to the *Notes*, but that he relies chiefly on the *Vocabulary*. To meet this condition, the *Vocabulary* has been made inclusive, and appears quite extensive.

Now, in the first place, the “average student” may be requested to read notes: there is indeed a right practical way by which he may be forced to read them. But leaving this aside, what condition confronts us when this attitude toward student habit is honored? Here is what we have: A textbook that costs \$1.90, with a scant 100 pages of reading matter, and a vocabulary that runs 106 pages! The 25 articles are written on that many phases of science by noted German scientists, including Albert Einstein and a number of others *personae non gratae* to the current German government. Let us try the vocabulary out, starting as near the middle as possible so as to avoid even the appearance of unfairness. Here is one column: naturgemäss, Naturgesetz, natürlich, Naturwissenschaft, naturwissenschaftlich, Nebel, neben, nebeneinander, nebeneinanderlagern, nebenher, Neenkephalon, negativ, Negativfilm, nehmen, neigen, Neigung, nein.

Is it possible that students who are able to read textual material of this nature even with the help and the prodding of a competent instructor, need a single one of these words except “Neenkephalon,” and could not this Greek compound have been disposed of better in the notes, here so energetically despised? Would not this text be of greater service had it been reduced by a half in size and at least a third in cost? Could these reductions not have been made by merely eliminating the vocabulary entirely and expanding the

<sup>1</sup> *A German Science Reader*. Edited by J. F. L. Raschen and Erle Fairfield. New York: Prentice-Hall, 1933. Pages vi+285.

notes just a little? Is not a vocabulary such as this one a crutch handed the patient after he has convalesced? Is the process not equivalent to what we would have were the sailor forced to wear his lifebelt after the tempest has spent its wrath and the shore is in sight if not actually reached?

Let us take another new text, as different from this one as possible, Professor Zinnecker's Hauptmann's *Hanneles Himmelfahrt*. For historical reasons, this edition is so important that a few words must be said by way of leading up to the issue as presented by the vocabulary.

In 1819, when Goethe was seventy years of age, he probably knew more about the United States than the United States knew about him, though in either case the information, in addition to being slender, was futurity and prospective rather than actual or even greatly useful. With Gerhart Hauptmann this is quite different. He closed his seventieth year with a bulky North American vogue: He knows this country, and this country knows him.

Hauptmann is no Goethe, but he more than any other German writer wears the Goethean mantle. For us he is the leader of German letters; with him, *nomen est omen*. From the angle of words Hauptmann is the more prolific. Despite the 143 volumes of the Weimar Edition, Goethe actually wrote fewer than ten million words, a limit outdistanced by an occasional journalist about the time he crossed the half century line. It would be impossible to say how much Hauptmann has thus far written; for we cannot calculate his unpublished "works," with special reference to his letters.

Hauptmann's popularity in this country from the beginning has been without parallel, even in such cases as those of Ibsen, Strindberg, Johan Bojer, Knut Hamsun, Arthur Schnitzler, and Jakob Wassermann, to say nothing of certain Slavic and Romance writers. There is no counting the time that has been devoted to him in the American lecture room. To corral every reference that has been made to him in American publications would be a huge if not impossible bibliographic task, for his name has reached down even to the columns of the rural sheet. He himself has visited this country on two notable occasions. His address at Columbia University on Goethe in 1932 (*Germanic Review*) was one of the very highest spots in the Goethe centenary anywhere. Ludwig Lewi-

sohn's edition of his translated works (Huebsch), totalling at present nearly a dozen sumptuous and sensible volumes, knows no equal in the United States. T. S. Baker's edition of *Die versunkene Glocke* (Holt) has been a classroom favorite for a quarter of a century. T. M. Campbell included with wisdom *Einsame Menschen* in his "German Plays of the 19th Century" (Crofts). Felix Wittmer's edition of *Die Weber* (Prentice-Hall), with Hauptmann's revised dialect on one page and the paraphrase on the opposite page in High German, is a bit of work about which any publisher might be excused for boasting. The edition of *Einsame Menschen* by Feise and Evans (Holt) is a work of scholarship such as we have been accustomed to look for from these men. The sixteen pages of Hauptmann text in Ernst Rose's teachable chrestomathy, *Deutsche Dichtung unsrer Zeit* (Prentice-Hall) has only one defect: there is not enough of it. And now comes Professor Zinnecker with this timely treatment of *Hanneles Himmelfahrt*.<sup>2</sup>

Let us look at this vocabulary. It covers 35 pages. The actual text covers 65 pages; but with the exception of those isolated cases where Hauptmann's characters speak New High German and not Silesian dialect, this is a double printing, with the dialect at the top half of the page and the normal German occupying the lower half. We have then just about as many pages taken up with the vocabulary as with the text, and this despite the fact that "approximately two hundred words of most frequent occurrence have been omitted from this vocabulary." Starting in at the same point in "N," we find these words: Narr, nass, nehmen, neigen, neugeboren, Neugier, nicht, nichts, Nichtstuer, nicken, nie, niederknien. Is it possible that students reading Hauptmann need to have these wordlets defined for them?<sup>3</sup>

There is however no "arm" in the vocabulary. Is it possible that Hauptmann wrote a dream-play on poverty without once using the

<sup>2</sup> *Hanneles Himmelfahrt. Traumdichtung in zwei Akten*. By Gerhart Hauptmann. Edited with Introduction, Paraphrase of Text, Notes, and Vocabulary by W. D. Zinnecker. New York: Prentice-Hall, 1933. Pages vi+149.

<sup>3</sup> The real difficulty with a text of this kind is its price: it costs too much. It is an undergraduate text; to read it therefore as one would read through a seminar problem is fatal. It can be rightly used only by rapid reading. It does not last long. It requires but a few periods, seven to ten. But it costs \$1.05. The merger text, such as has been edited recently by Campbell, Soule, Zeydel, Rose, Lieder, Thayer, Liptzin, and others will, rather obviously, become the text of the future.



adjective "arm"? If he had done this, attention should have been called to the uncommon fact, for an editor can never afford to forget that creations as poetic as this one will be taught by teachers who do everything they do with what Nietzsche would have called, had he written in English, "enthusiasm." Under "B" I find 46 words that will never be looked up or referred to by a student who deserved a passing grade in the beginning course. There are five different meanings assigned to "gelt" in addition to a note on this word. This is excessive, especially as compared with "sterben" which, for no assignable reason, is omitted entirely. Under the root-form "hauch" we have the noun, the verb, and the verbal noun. It would have been far more useful to have included some such statement as this: "Verbal nouns are more used in German than in English. There are just as many verbal nouns as there are verbs, each is neuter, and admits of only one change in inflection, an 's' in the genitive singular."<sup>4</sup>

I have personally derived a measure of pleasure from comparing this vocabulary with Charles Henry Meltzer's translation in the Lewisohn edition. But Dr. Zinnecker nowhere refers to the Lewisohn-Meltzer translation. I refer to it at the very beginning of my course, but see to it that the copy is borrowed from the main Library and placed quite beyond temptation. The wisdom or unwisdom of both editor and teacher in this case is a moot point. In Latin, for example, we might find an occasional student who could really read Latin, had he used a good translation with moral constancy and becoming intelligence. In giving *Faust*, I never hesitate to refer my students to the many and in some cases excellent

<sup>4</sup> These remarks are not made in order to show the imperfections of the vocabulary: perfect vocabularies simply do not exist, owing to the imponderable divergence of opinion mentioned above. They are made rather to show the peculiar status of vocabulary-making as it at present exists. On the whole Professor Zinnecker's text is well done. His introduction follows closely *Gerhart Hauptmann: Leben und Werke*, by Paul Schlenther, revised by Arthur Eloesser, Berlin, 1922, pages 105-114. More stress should have been laid on the exact meaning of "gleichsam," for even "advanced" students render it with undying fidelity to error as "likewise." The four pages of notes are suggestive, especially in showing how to omit certain "Flickwörter." The expression "Das wirst du geträumt haben" might have been more fully explained. It is a condensation of a fuller expression: Wenn du die Sache untersuchst, so wirst du finden, dass du das geträumt hast. And the average student is more familiar with Grimm's *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* than the reverse, *Haus- und Kindermärchen*.

English translations, though it would not occur to me to admit a student to the course, or pass him at the end, who could not read the German with reasonable intelligence. The entire matter of translations however is a difficult one in itself. For the student a translation is a jigsaw puzzle already put together. The student should be required to do at least some synthetic work.

Having compiled two large vocabularies myself—*Modern German Stories*, (1927) and *Schnitzler: Stories and Plays* (1930), I feel that I may be pardoned if I speak briefly "aus den Akten." In the April 1933 issue of the *Modern Language Journal*, Professor Robert Bruce Roulston pays his respects to the general inadequacy of vocabularies in these words: "What do the existing vocabularies have to offer us? A list of words which have no more connection with the book in hand than if it had been mistakenly bound with the text being used." I have used, or at least examined, literally more than a thousand German textbooks. I have never seen a single one to which this assertion applies with even a remote shred or shimmer of accuracy. Professor Roulston continues: "Card catalogues are made out from the text and then the dictionary meanings appended to the individual words." No sane human being would, because he could not, make a vocabulary by any such process. One can only infer from this that Professor Roulston himself has never compiled a vocabulary, and one can be certain that a vocabulary could not be compiled that would suit him. Divergence of opinion has its way. I have never used a perfectly satisfactory vocabulary myself, and I have certainly never seen one that was wholly perfect, judged from the objective laid down by the man who made it.

When ready for the vocabulary of my own *Modern German Stories*,<sup>5</sup> the general editor asked me how long it would be. I replied

<sup>5</sup> Since compliments are none too common among teachers of German, I cannot refrain from announcing the one that was paid me for this text. The vocabulary contained in the original edition the merest handful of omissions, such as "Zunge," and in less than half a dozen places a word was defined adequately for one usage but not for another, such as "Scheibe" when applied to a window as contrasted with the moon. A colleague stated that since the word list showed these slips I must have "farmed the job of making the vocabulary out to a hack." No, I did it first myself, then had it gone over by my colleague, Professor Wadeuhl, who has had much experience with vocabulary-making, and then I paid three different students ten dollars each to go over the text while it was in page proof and try it out.

that, since we have twenty-two different authors each with his own stock of words, it would naturally be longer than the text itself if full. When told that this was utterly out of the question, that the vocabulary would have to be kept well under one hundred pages (there are 262 full pages of prose text) there was nothing else left for me to do but to follow the leader: The vocabulary covers 88 pages, and has been criticized for its skimpiness.

Let us try the vocabulary out, however, at the same spot at which the other two were tried. The sole difference of any consequence at all between my own vocabulary and the ones above mentioned is in the inclusion of "Neffe," which a student might well be expected to know, and "Neidhammel," which should be included in any text vocabulary.

There is not the slightest bit of use to labor the point any further: it is clear. It is clear too that money is being wasted, also time and energy, in these long, supposedly full and complete word lists, compiled as though they were the very first that had ever been made, as though there were no German dictionaries ranking from the very small pocket affairs up to Whitney and Heath, and as though the American student had no ability whatsoever at sensing the meaning of a German word, even though it have its full cognate in English.<sup>6</sup>

What are we going to do about vocabularies? Are we to wait till Drs. Hagboldt, Hauck, Morgan, Purin, Thurnau, Wadepuhl, *et al.*, all spiritually subsidized by the ATG (let us hope this formidable organization is able to avoid some of the hardships of New York's banking TGT) have compiled the really orthodox 3000 words (the very exactness of this whole number and perfectly round number scares me) and then have some one of them write lyric, epic, and dramatic works that involve just these words, and let the student

<sup>6</sup> The attitude of the publishers themselves in this connection is rather significant. They contend that they cannot sell a text if it does not have a vocabulary. They should, however, not be allowed to say, or dictate, entirely how texts are to be published. And the reduction they allow if they bring out two texts, one with and one without a vocabulary is inexplicably small. Prentice-Hall charge \$2.75 for Liptzin's *From Novalis to Nietzsche* with vocabulary and \$2.50 without. There are 607 pages in the text of which 95 are vocabulary. One would think they could sell the text without vocabulary for \$2.25. When we try this vocabulary out under "N," we find not a single word that should offer the slightest difficulty to a student beginning his second year. The 95 pages could easily have been reduced to 25.

learn such words as "Gekröse" and "Träber" from Schiller and the Bible? I for one wish it were as simple as that; but words cannot be learned as isolated individual speech units or symbols; they have to be learned in a text, con-textually. An appalling amount of time is being wasted in this country through the compiling of individual word lists for every text that is brought out. It is high time that we initiate the custom of expanding our notes and reducing the vocabularies to the merest lists of such words as no student could be expected to know.

For our present custom there is an historical reason. This country is a League of Nations. We are all immigrants, though some of us are at present in the thirteenth generation. The English language people did the most to make this country what it is; the Germans came second, the first real boat-load of them landing at Philadelphia on October 6, 1683, two hundred and fifty years ago. With but very few exceptions, however, the Germans who have come to this country have been neither scholars nor interested in the furthering of scholarship. They have come here for the quite simple reason that they wanted to make a living. In so far as this has been their sole objective they have done little indeed toward the spread of a sound knowledge of German here. The older members of the family continued to speak a German that was none too good from the beginning and grew worse as they themselves grew older. Their children have learned English from the beginning. Unlike the situation that obtains in any other country, German has been taught here in a really surprising number of cases by emigrated Germans.<sup>7</sup> Nor has German been taught here with anything approaching seriousness for more than a half century. The Modern Language Association was founded in 1883, primarily for the purpose of elevating the standards for the teaching of French, German, and, remotely, also Spanish and Italian. The MLA was originally, more or less, a pedagogical organization. That phase of the matter has now passed into the hands of other associations, though

<sup>7</sup> Professor Faust in his *The German Element in the United States* (II, 247), finds it surprising that some of "the most eminent and influential" teachers of German in the United States "are of native American birth." Fancy a scholar who would be able to take the same stand with regard to the teaching of any non-German language in Germany, or making the same point in connection with any other European country.

our vocabularies are compiled almost entirely by members of the MLA, each compiler trying to outdo the other in "fullness" and "completeness" when he should be striving to see how small he can make the word list at the back of his book.

All of this could be eliminated by the publication of just one general school dictionary, if Heath, Whitney, and others are too large and too expensive, though they cost less than some German texts. If the German-language teacher of German in this country finds these "complete" vocabularies handy for his own needs, he should learn more English at once; if the English-language teacher of German in this country finds these dictionaries in miniature handy for his own purposes he should learn more German at once. It is pathetic to see an American student pay a dollar or two dollars and more for a German text, and then equip his vocabulary with protruding letters so that he may turn quickly to a given word when, in reality, the vocabulary that has been pieced together for him could be used, with not a great many deletions, additions, and general modifications, for a totally different text.

I am very dubious about the sacred 3000 words that our vocabulary-makers are endeavoring to weave somehow into a pattern that can be grasped by the American student; but there is no dubiety in my mind at all as to what the next step should be with regard to the special text vocabulary: It should be reduced to the simplest possible terms. The student should be so drilled in the knack of forcing the correct meanings of words that he may come, early in the second year of his German, to the point where

He spells them true by intuition's light,  
And needs no glossary to set him right.

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## DERIVATIVES IN THE NEW BASIC FRENCH VOCABULARY<sup>1</sup>

THE committee which has prepared this word-list has invited the comments of the profession on it. Responding to that invitation, I wish to go straight to the heart of what I consider the principal shortcoming of the list as it now stands: its failure to utilize systematically as a cardinal element of any standard word-list for foreign language teaching the function of *derivative words*. This feature of the new Minimum Standard Vocabulary for German (adopted at St. Louis in December), which I believe was first enunciated and followed as a pedagogical principle in the German Frequency Word Book (see the Preface to that book for a discussion of details as regards German), is based upon a well-established psychological law of learning, namely, that of association.

All word-lists presuppose an act of learning on the part of the student which predicates the addition of the unknown to the known in his mind. Suppose a pupil is confronted with the word *maison*: he knows what 'house' means, but he does not know that *maison* means 'house.' When he has mastered that fact, we say that he has learned the word *maison*, has added a new word to his (reading or passive) vocabulary. The case is radically different, however, when the student meets the French word *table*. This word is not only identical in form with an English word; its meaning is identical too. In reading, at any rate, the student's recognition of this word is all but instantaneous: at most he needs an assurance that his assumption of identity is correct. This fact has been recognized by the makers of the French list, who designate such words as cognates and star them in the list.

But the matter does not stop here. Suppose the student has learned that *travailler* means 'work,' and is then confronted with *travail*. Is this a new word, in the sense that *maison* was a new word on first occurrence? Emphatically, no. The student's eye has recorded the letters *travail*—as meaning 'work'; when he meets them again, the idea 'work' will unquestionably be flashed to his brain. In short, when he learned *travailler*, he potentially learned *travail* as well, and perhaps *travailleur* too. This is in a nutshell the

<sup>1</sup> Modern Language Journal XVIII, 238.



principle of *basic* and *derivative* words (as we called them in German), or of *word-families*, if that term seems less questionable.

Now, my objection to the Basic French Vocabulary is that its authors have blown cold and hot in this matter: now they recognize derivation, now they reject it. For example, they assume that the student will know the noun *baiser* if he learns the verb, but that he will not know the noun *pouvoir* by learning the verb; and this inconsistency goes through a long list of such doublets. Again, they assume certain suffixes and prefixes as not creating new words: e.g., *dizaine*, *cousine*, *lectrice*, *deuxième*, *ramener*, *refermer*; on the other hand, they count as separate words such pairs as *amuser*, *s'amuser* (and many other reflexives), *arrêt*, *arrêter*, *cinq*, *cinquante*, etc. In a long list of cases, *-ment* forms recognizable derivatives, e.g., *actuellement*, *complètement*, *entièrement*, *heureusement*, etc. In another considerable number of cases, *-ment* forms a new word, e.g., *autrement*, *décidément*, *doucement*, *joliment*, etc. In some verbs, *re-* is assumed as known: *refermer*; in others it is unknown: *revenir*. It is not clear to me why *-ci* and *-là* can be added to *celle(s)* without forming a new word, whereas *ceci* and *cela* are counted as separate from *ça* and *ce*. Nor do I understand why *cinquième* is given, but not *sixième*, *neuvième* but not *dixième*, *vingt et un* but not *trente et un*. Particularly interesting to me is the fact that *bonsoir* is listed as a derivative of *bonjour*! As a matter of fact, both are derivative compounds, related to *jour* and *soir* respectively, but not to each other, nor, strictly speaking, to *bon*.

If this criticism sounds destructive and purely negative, that is merely because such an approach is prerequisite to the really constructive suggestion which I wish to offer to the shapers of the French list: namely, that they should frankly accept the *principle* of word-families and carry it out systematically both in the arrangement and the counting of their standard list. This involves no radical change, as I see it, in the present French word-list; but it does call for a new point of view on the part of the committee. If they embrace it, they will put the learner in the center of the pedagogical picture and take the probable ease of learning as their starting point.

Not pretending to any profound or wide knowledge of French vocabulary, I am somewhat hesitant about making definite and specific proposals in accordance with the above suggestion. I would

like to point out, however, that the French list reveals a considerable number of prefixes and suffixes which could easily be taught to a pupil, and which, once mastered, would carry him far beyond the range of the list itself, thus promoting the language mastery which all word-lists aim at. Cf. *déplaire, impatience, incapable, revenir, réflexion, souligner, surveiller, admirable, visage, anniversaire, travailleur, amoureux, vitesse, cuisinière, plaisanterie, admiration*. Second, the list contains a good many compounds, most of which are made up of familiar elements and hence require very little learning; e.g. *après-midi, autrefois, bonhomme, peut-être*. Finally, there are many "families" of two or more words, which any student who has been taught to look for stem-kinship will unhesitatingly put together in his mind as members of one semantic and morphological group.

These details, I am convinced, will offer no fundamental difficulty, once the principle of associative learning has been invoked, and the list re-examined in the light of it. It is my earnest hope, inspired by my interest in modern language pedagogy—and that alone justifies me in entering upon this discussion—that the committee in charge of the Basic French Vocabulary will reshape its list from that point of view.

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## A FLEXIBLE FOREIGN LANGUAGE COURSE

*(Author's summary.—Foreign language curricula are rigid in structure and limited in scope. An elastic course, involving little or no expense, is recommended as an addition to the curriculum. This course would supplement or complement the fixed curriculum, replace some of the smaller courses, and round out the student's language training. It could be utilized in universities, colleges, and high schools.)*

WITH few exceptions, the foreign language curricula of our high schools, colleges, and universities are cast in a hard, unyielding mould. Year after year the subjects offered are practically the same, the treatment of them is the same, and not infrequently the hours at which they are given are the same. Procrustes might well be our patron saint.

Because of our rigid curricula, students have to follow without the privilege of an alternative the uniform routine set down in the schedule of studies. Should the program for the year happen to omit the modern drama, the eighteenth century, the survey of the literature, or the most illustrious writer in the language, or should the student's combination of courses in other departments prevent his taking the course or courses required by the curriculum, owing to conflicts in hours, no arrangement exists whereby, at the proper moment, a serious gap in his language training may be avoided. Or, if the student transfers from one institution to another, the chances are that what might have been taken care of in the given year at the first school will have no place at all in the second. What to do? Nothing much. The schedule has been arranged for the department. The curriculum can not be altered just to accommodate the student.

Parenthetically, the query is here made whether, in view of the discouraging language situation that obtains today in the United States, a little skill in the administration of the curriculum might not often be repaid by the retention of desirable students who occasionally leave us either temporarily or permanently for such trivial motives as schedule difficulties which, with a modicum of effort, we could easily overcome.

As a result of the fixity and the enforced incompleteness of the language curriculum, it is to be supposed that even "majors" graduate once in a while without anything more than a casual and hazy acquaintance with Molière, Goethe, or Cervantes or other

notable figures or with certain literary or linguistic phases considered indispensable to a decent training in the language. As for the non-specializing student, whose continuance with us might sometimes be determined by the simple expedient of releasing him from certain routine work demanded by the curriculum and putting him into something more inspiring to him personally, he may, under our present inflexible system of courses, take leave of us without the slightest induction into the spirit of the language as representative of the civilization, thought, or culture of a foreign people or into the esthetic enjoyment of its literature.

The corrective for conditions like these, caused mainly by the rigidity of the curriculum, lies in the establishment, whether in the colleges or in the high schools, of a flexible, liberal course that can be handled in any way suited to the particular circumstances. It need not interfere with the fixed curriculum. On the contrary, it should complement and strengthen it.

The defects of the fixed curriculum have, of course, been understood for a long time, and something in the nature of what has just been suggested has been tried now and then by teachers in fields outside of the languages. So far as I know, the results have been gratifying both to the students and to the teachers. There is no reason why the plan should not prove successful in the foreign languages.

Seven years ago our department of Spanish undertook to supplement the fixed program of courses with a course called "Individual Work." Tried down to the present only in the summer session, where it has operated effectively, it will now be a part of the curriculum of the regular year.

The course is given for varying credits, depending upon the amount of time and effort that the student is expected to put forth. The meetings are arranged so as to fit into the student's schedule without conflict. Instead of class recitations, the students are handled in conference either individually or in groups of not more than three or four. No specific subject of study is announced, since neither the individuals nor the groups are obliged, unless they so wish, to cover the same territory. If it is found that a student is interested in a certain aspect of the literature, in the works of a certain school or author, or in composition, an outline of the study is drawn up for him and he is set to work. If it is felt

that hiatuses in his literary training need filling in, the work is planned to remedy the deficiencies. The conferences, which are held once a week for an hour, or sometimes less, permit a reasonable amount of discussion—perhaps, as a matter of fact, more personal discussion—than would be feasible in a regular class meeting much oftener. As in the ordinary course, reports are required and examinations given.

Described thus baldly, the "individual" course does not seem to be a radical departure. It upsets nothing. It fits without friction into the existing scheme and supplements the fixed curriculum. It causes no dislocation of teaching schedules, brings no conflicts into the programs of students, and, though virtually individual instruction, entails no unusual expense. In most cases, in reality, it need not give rise to any extra expense, since it can be substituted for one of the smaller courses while at the same time making the inclusion of that very course possible.

In actual operation, the educational advantages of the course have been discovered to be many. In view of the fact that the student is thrown largely "on his own," a different attitude from that observable in most undergraduate classes—the course, it should be remarked in passing, was not devised for graduate students, for whom similar work is available in most institutions—is imposed upon him. His sense of responsibility and his self-reliance are called into play, precisely as they would be, were he attending the graduate school or a European university. The conferences oblige him to think and to express his thoughts more coherently and at greater length than is customary in class recitations. There is less of the perfunctory "pumping method" than is employed in the classroom. The obligation on the part of the student to watch his difficulties and to keep track of them is imperative.

On the economic side, also, such a course has marked advantages. It eliminates—an important consideration in these parlous days of economic stringency in public educational institutions—the necessity of offering courses attended by two, three, or four students, since it can, without much loss of efficiency, take the place of two, three, or more small courses. It enables departments to offer work that could not otherwise be offered without additions to the staff. Furthermore, it increases the opportunities for paying

special attention to the bright student not enrolled in honors courses without the cost often involved in the honors system.

Though our "individual" course was installed primarily for educational reasons, the present situation in state-supported universities has shown that the economic factor may lend it a weight originally underestimated by us. In nearly every language department there are advanced undergraduate courses having enrolments of five students or less each. These small courses may absorb a disproportionate share of the teaching time of one or more teachers, and these teachers are likely to belong to the higher ranks and, therefore, to the more highly paid class. It can very well happen that, in a department of six or eight teachers, the time devoted to the teaching of a dozen students in small, advanced undergraduate classes (graduate courses are not here considered for the simple reason that, in my humble opinion, the question of cost should not affect them any more than it affects technical, professional courses in medicine, law, or engineering) may be equivalent to one-half or three-quarters, and at times an even larger proportion, of the full teaching schedule of a highly paid teacher. This, of course, means unusually expensive teaching, and the members of a state legislature might at any time inquire why some method has not been devised for bringing down the cost of such small classes. Would it not, then, be advisable to handle the students of these classes in "individual" courses—either strictly individually, with conferences of the length adapted to the available time of the teacher, or in small groups—at a much reduced expense, especially since the students, that is, advanced undergraduates, should be of just the right type to benefit by the plan and no decrease of teaching efficiency need ensue?

To avoid misunderstanding, let me state, in case I have not made the point clear, that the "individual" course that I am recommending has nothing to do with the special courses arranged for "distinction" or "honors" students. Students who enroll in it would be ordinary students of the sort that comes to any of our undergraduate classes beyond the more elementary ones. The work done might be of the same general nature and extent as in the conventional courses or it might be quite different. Whether or not the reduced amount of formal teaching would turn out to be a detriment, each teacher would have to determine for himself. In

our experience, which has been limited to one "individual" course during any one term, no harmful consequences have been noticed. We have found that the average, as well as the talented, student is capable of independent study under direction and that he is more likely than not to accomplish more in the "individual" course than in the regulation course, and that for at least three very good reasons: he cannot escape his responsibilities at the conferences, where he is alone or accompanied by only two or three others; he actually has more time at his disposal through being relieved of frequent class attendance; and his standards are not dragged down by the poor exhibitions of scholarship that occur either sporadically or regularly in most classes.

In the high schools, if an "individual" course were established, it might, at little or no expense, provide the means for enabling a group of interested students to continue their language studies beyond the two years that now constitute the customary foreign language curriculum.

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#### GOOD NIGHT

Good night! good night!  
Far from us daylight takes its flight.  
Yet like a star that onward guides  
The goodness of our God abides.  
It seeks and guards us with its light.  
Good night! good night!

Till tomorrow! till tomorrow!  
But tomorrow is uncertain.  
We are about to close our eyes.  
Shall we behold the new day rise?  
And we say, perhaps in vain,  
Till tomorrow! till tomorrow!

Translated from the French of Victor Hugo by

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## SOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT OF ORAL SELF EXPRESSION IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

*(Author's summary.*—Ability to express one's self, either in the vernacular or in a foreign language, probably the result of specific practice in the direction of concept-to-expression-unit. Difficult to train in a foreign language because of the priority of neural paths, more or less worn by usage, leading from concepts to native-language expression units. Analysis of forced training in self-expression of an adult cast into a foreign environment. Conclusion is that school conditions should be made to motivate, in so far as possible, the environment just outlined.)

**I**T IS an undeniable fact that an individual can read a foreign language without being able to speak it; and some persons, who have been engaged in foreign countries in occupations that do not require any reading of the language, can understand it when heard but cannot read it.

One is led to inquire what is back of these special abilities, and why they function only in the particular way in which they have been practiced. While ability to express thought in one's native language, except for professional speakers and writers, is not usually so highly developed as is the ability to interpret thought expressed by others, there is never such a disparity in the two attainments as is evidenced in a foreign language. This difference in receptive and transmittive abilities is clearly due to lack of practice in that phase of linguistic use wherein less proficiency is had. We are forced to express ourselves in our own language; but, unless we are professional writers or public speakers, we do not take the trouble to train ourselves thoroughly in the art of expressing our thoughts. On the other hand, it is entirely possible to devote all our study to understanding what we read in the foreign language and neglect altogether writing and speaking. If we do get some practice in writing it, even this type of self-expression cannot be adapted to a speaking ability without actual drill in speech.

The physiological explanation of the foregoing facts is probably that nerve paths have to be worn to the neurones in the direction that the ability is to function. One can see how, for example, a connection can be established between a foreign word or phrase and its corresponding concept, and that thereafter this word or phrase would call up the concept, because there is only one path to follow. If the process is reversed and the concept is made the point of departure, the path taken will surely be that



well-worn trail leading from concept to native-language word. There will likely be several native-language words that offer inviting trails to their doors from this single mental concept; but the foreign language word, that would certainly function if it were made the starting point, cannot compete with the former because the trail in that direction has not even been blazed. In like manner it is conceivable to imagine actual neural paths that lead to meaning from the seat of the auditory stimulus of a foreign word—in individuals who can understand what they hear in a foreign language, but who cannot read it—but (because there has been no occasion to read it) not from the visual stimulus of the same.

Let us consider how speech in a foreign language works as a finished product when we make use of a foreign language in which we are able to express ourselves fluently. The first thing that strikes our attention is the fact that the words, phrases, and sentences are uttered without any aid of, or much interference from, our native language. Whole phrases seem to form themselves at the threshold of utterance, and after being approved by some subtle censor come forth naturally in spurts of speech. Occasionally, a bit of reshaping is indulged in before utterance is voiced. Perhaps a more fitting word is substituted in the expression; perhaps the order of the words is improved; perhaps inflections are mentally checked and adjusted.<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to analyze what took place before we were able to handle the foreign language in question in this easy manner. We can get a hint of it when a vague idea fails to materialize in its foreign dress. When there is an obstruction of any sort, the subconscious censor comes to the forefront of consciousness, and frantic efforts are made to untangle the knot. Allied patterns of speech in the foreign idiom are summoned and compared. If this fails, English thought with its greater wealth of expression units, takes the reins, and the vague idea is clothed in clear-cut English terms. This in turn is translated into the foreign language. Such a procedure naturally slows up the movement of spontaneous expression.

When the mental activities we have just outlined are taking place, it is obvious that the thinking itself is also taking place in

<sup>1</sup> This same process of appraisal and checking, possibly different in some respects, is evidenced in careful utterance in our native language.

the foreign language until a hiatus of sufficient force to break the thread occurs. Just as when thinking and expressing one's self in the vernacular, a hazy idea probably exists when the effort is initiated. It is a sort of anticipatory idea that becomes concrete and definite only when it is reinforced by words that fall easily and naturally into their accustomed niches.

A still prior stage of development may be studied if we attempt to express ourselves in another foreign language in which we lack proficiency. We find that some phrases come forth glibly; others straggle through hesitatingly and incorrectly; and still others refuse to be cajoled into aborning. One is led to believe that the whole output is dependent on the available patterns or models of speech that may be used outright or modified to suit the needs as they serve as cumbersome units of thought.

Since the growth and development of these speech patterns is conceived here to be of vital importance, it is necessary to elaborate more fully concerning them. A child evidently makes uses of models in constructing fitting expressions in the vernacular. He will form past tenses and past participles by adding the suffix "ed" to infinitives to which he has never conceivably heard it attached. All of us have heard children say, "I goed," and "I have eated." Such efforts are clearly not consciously reasoned out modes of construction, because the children making use of them are too young to reason them out. It must be a type of generalized imitation, and therefore apparently applicable to learning a foreign language too.

Language patterns probably function from the very beginning of any training in speech in such matters as giving a feeling of fitness for word order and correct inflections. For example if the phrase *la casa blanca* is capable of being uttered in a single effort, *la casa amarilla* is merely a simple matter of changing colors, for the order and inflections will surely be unconsciously imitated. It is also possible that *la casa verda* may be used too, but the latter form of the word will probably die of disuse when the correct form *verde* is seen and heard repeatedly. *La casa verde* then may become another pattern for such expressions as *la mesa verde*, etc. Mistakes must occur in the use of any known way of learning to speak. The process of initial-diffuse-movement seems to be a part of learning even our native language. But since oral usage of any

language is most often in the form of discourse, and the beginner always talks to some one who knows the foreign language well, the replies he hears play a great part in correcting wrong forms, just as they did when as a child he said "goed" and "eated."

If we try to piece together phrases made up of words of a language we can not even read, we see readily the lack of speech patterns to follow and the part they play in oral expression. Without them as a framework we are helpless. The only recourse possible is the slow construction by rule from English patterns. We are also deprived of the help (possibly functioning only as a check) that the hearing of such patterns give us in a language we know from the recognition standpoint.

It seems folly to attempt to teach oral self-expression before a recognition knowledge of the new language is possessed. Yet until quite recently this was the usual procedure. Students were subjected to foreign words (very rarely to connected groups because of the impossibility of illustrating meaning) as the object or the picture in each case was held up to view, or the action involved was illustrated. After only one or two such introductions to the new words, the students were expected to reply to questions and situations through the medium of the foreign language. And the worst of it all was that, because no English was used, it was thought that the students were actually thinking in the foreign language. They were admonished *not* to think in English but not told how to avoid doing so. It is doubtful whether such a procedure is not productive of more harm than good even when used as an adjunct to recognition training; and by no stretch of the imagination can it be seen to be conducive to genuine self-expression. Each individual language has its own special patterns that are followed in countless similar instances; and failing to possess these in some form (even though it be only as a check), it would be wholly miraculous to build up the foreign language units with due correctness. If the learner's English thought is forcibly clothed in the foreign-language symbols, pieced together by conscious rule, the process must necessarily be a transverbalization of English thought. The word order will be English, the idioms English, the syntax English and the whole fabric shot through with English. In case by chance some perfect constructions be evolved, it is doubtful whether anything so artificially manufactured can ever rid itself of its artifi-

ciality sufficiently to function independently of the English mould in which it was cast. There could be no core, or nucleus of available similar material into which one such single case might be filed away. The aggregation of such isolated constructions could have no coherence other than the English thought structure that gave each one birth and to which they are securely tied.

But on the other hand, if the learner has at his command a stock of ready-made units that operate semi-automatically in arriving at meaning, a natural foundation already exists for conveying meaning. No systematic effort seemingly has ever been expended in trying to find out just how recognition units might be turned into expression units.

If we recall our own early attempts in a foreign country at trying to speak the language, which we could already read, we may get some light on the matter. Let us suppose that, in addition to a reading knowledge, we had gone through some drill in answering questions in the foreign language by the customary process of first translating unconsciously or at least subconsciously the teacher's question into English, then answering in English, and finally translating and giving back the answer in the foreign language. As soon as this torture was finished, we usually sat at ease for a time, letting our fellow-victims worry about their probable turn and the consequent need of paying attention to further questions. In the foreign country, a different situation confronted us at the restaurant, in the hotel, in the street, or wherever we went. A question was asked and an answer was expected before it was possible to go through the customary process of thinking our way through its mazes in terms of English symbols of thought. After having been repeatedly humiliated by being considered dumb, we quickly learned to take advantage of short cuts and come back at our interlocutor with whole groups of words forcibly dug up from recognition sources, and linked together in a more or less fluent manner. Sometimes we answered by rearranging the question; sometimes we utilized only a single block of the question, and had the remainder of the reply constructed by the time our voice reached this needed part of the statement. Perhaps the element, forcibly constructed when first required, was stored away and used on later occasions alongside of the fast-growing stock of similar available active units. The necessity of giving expression to our wants through the medium

of the foreign language motivated us and spurred us on to efforts never before exerted; but the element of speed, both in apprehending what was said to us and of saying what we wished to say before our antagonist walked away, was the chief factor that made us change our tactics and forced us to do elemental thinking directly in the foreign language. We found that we could no longer apprehend meaning in terms of separate words, for speech always came in spurts with no more break between the words than between the separate syllables of any word thereof. We learned that we would be listened to only when we replied in like manner. We soon caught on to the fact that a reply would be tolerated if it contained at least one unified element intermingled with a few separate words, but that we were better understood when the entire statement was a succession of unified blocks.

We met this challenge and learned to speak the new language; but even we who are teachers of foreign languages have profited little by the experience. We have not attempted to analyze and duplicate that environment, so far as it might be possible to do so, in the classroom. While no normal individual would dare claim that we can set up artificial conditions that approach the foreign environment, we can approximate some of them; and owing to a more complete control, we can bring them to bear in a more systematic order.

We can and should postpone training in self-expression until a recognition acquaintance of the language is acquired. Aside from the theoretical grounds for this order of approach advocated earlier in this article, the wisdom of it is clearly seen when we note the relative advancement of two persons cast into a foreign environment one of whom can already read the language and the other of whom knows nothing whatever about it. Or better still, may we be convinced of the value of a reading knowledge as a foundation if we compare our own progress in acquiring skill in speech in a language we could already read and in that of an unwritten dialect which had to be learned without such a background.

We can limit the active vocabulary range to material that involves a vocabulary that the student is sure to possess in its recognition aspect. This is easiest of all conditions to meet, for it means that we utilize appropriately selected material from that which has been previously studied from the recognition standpoint, i.e.,

we may base our active vocabulary on our previously acquired passive vocabulary.

We can arrange situations that tend to bring about a need and a desire for self-expression in the foreign language. This condition can easily be met by suitable drill exercises that challenge the student's ingenuity and appeal to his own interests. Such exercises must be novel and varied; they must not be confined to mere question and answer in the foreign language, but should include opportunity to finish an incomplete remark, to make statements about items in the lesson, to expand a skeleton statement through the addition of suitable modifiers, to summarize in skeleton form sentences with superfluous modifiers. These exercises must be attractive and easy; they must touch upon student life, and particularly that phase that deals with leisure time, and they should never demand anything not familiar in its recognition form. They must be concrete and definite; the problem to be solved must be specific and admit of only one solution. So far as possible within the foregoing limits, the element of banter and good-natured fun may be injected in the form of improvised exercises. This can be done by making the challenge apply specifically to some certain individuals whose peculiarities or weaknesses are known to the instructor and the students. For example: Who is always sick on test days? Who always comes late? Who sometimes goes to sleep in class? Who likes ice cream better than Spanish (or French)?

We can arrange the types of exercises above so that the responses are predominantly in unified spontaneous phrase groups rather than in laboriously constructed series of single words. This is probably the most important item of all in our systematic attempt to teach natural oral self-expression. Of course, speed in handling the set exercises plays a large part in the proper functioning of this element, but the type of exercise that lends itself to such ends must also be considered. Experience has shown that for beginners it is a good plan to drill the students in choosing two or three such printed phrase groups needed to express a complete judgment from various possibilities listed. The student may look at the book until he is ready to deliver any needed phrase and then raise his eyes on enunciating it. With a little practice it is about as easy to respond in phrase units as in single words. As a matter of fact, students do not rebel from the very first day of this de-



ferred practice at being asked to be prepared to finish orally such statements, the first phrase of which is read as a cue by the instructor. Needless to say that the phrases are often incorrect; but they are usually fluent if the instructor shows that he will not tolerate any other type of response. If the oral work is enunciated in natural breath groups and the students are thus trained to apprehend meaning in word blocks, it is no great task to induce responses couched in a similar manner. Whatever be the type of exercise the instructor must always be on guard to exact a unit response. Even if the student has to attend to some needed alignment of inflections, he may be asked to finish the product mentally before attempting to enunciate it.

We can, as soon as some slight degree of proficiency is attained in manipulating whole phrase groups in oral responses, take up that very important task of training our students how to juggle the variable elements in standard phrase patterns. The situations calling for self-expression are too varied and too unlike to make it humanly possible for the learner to acquire and have at his ready command fitting phrases with which to meet all needs. When dealing with the vernacular as a child, neither did he have a sufficient store of expression units. He solved the problem then, seemingly very clumsily, but apparently in the only way open to him—by constructing new units along the lines of his existing stock. If he had no remembered model to follow, he apparently strung known words together in haphazard order unconscious of agreement or inflections.<sup>2</sup>

The beginner in a foreign language resorts to similar tactics if left to proceed without guidance in a crisis; and since his stock of usable units for thought expressions are of course predominantly English phrases, it is these that he will use as a model. Needless to say, constructions on such bases will be a misfire about nine times out of ten, because the needed foreign-language phrase will about that often fail to conform to its English prototype. Clearly,

<sup>2</sup> The writer recently heard a two-year-old child at play who, when noticing that her playmates had disappeared, said, "Wher's dem?" [Where is them?] Upon seeing the other children, she answered her own question by saying, "Dar's dem." [There is them.] No harm to ultimate correctness of speech is apparently done by such improvisations. The correct forms, constantly heard in similar situations, soon supplant the wrong combinations and improper inflections.

systematic guidance is necessary at this point; and seemingly, the best way to furnish it is to control the conditions and concentrate on the particular needs. The approved plan of building must be followed. The blue prints of the foreign language in question must be studied and adhered to—but not to the extent of training architects to draw other blue prints for other builders.

In addition to an active vocabulary limited to minimum needs, the most common inflections must be known—not merely when functioning in the direction of symbol to meaning, but in the opposite direction of meaning to symbol. Apparently the only conceivable way of traveling from meaning to the particular inflectional form that serves in the foreign language as a symbol of that particular meaning is to grasp meaning by its native-language sign, and while thus held clearly in mind to visualize the corresponding foreign-language sign and thus forcibly link the two things together. Obviously, the process is a three-fold one: (1) concept, (2) English-inflection, (3) foreign-language-inflection. For some time to come, the path traveled must be via this three-point route; but if practice is duly speeded up when using this new unit alongside of phrases that have already been functionally trained, the way-station will soon be eliminated and a direct connection will be built up.

In the same manner, a forced application of definitely learned and consciously applied principles of syntax of the foreign language may be trained to function. As a matter of fact, training in the correct use of inflections and of the principles of syntax should be combined, because the two things are inextricably bound together. Only by the merest chance would the inflectional elements in any two languages coincide throughout in nature and extent. Terminations in one language do duty for linguistic particles, differently placed, in another. An expressed subject pronoun in English does duty for verbal endings in Spanish. Since no two languages are at all commensurable when viewed word by word, there is no feasible way to compare them except by taking a cross-section of one, (a speech unit) sufficiently large that when compared with the corresponding cross-section (speech unit) of the other, the respective sections will encompass the same meaning.

But for once an inherent difficulty is an ultimate gain. The necessity for dealing with whole phrases in drill work fosters their



being isolated and set apart for patterns. One such phrase may be learned outright, and copious drill centering around the variable elements may be engaged in. For example *Le veo en el agua* may become *La veo en el agua*. *Los (las), (te), (os), (me), veo en el agua* by requesting the student to change the phrase to "I see her," etc. And as soon as the matter of the form and meaning of the object personal pronouns is understood well enough to count on the right form being laboriously dug up when needed, active drill in verbal changes may be taken up. All possible variants of *Me veo en el agua* such as *Nos vemos en el agua, Te ven en el agua*, etc., may be elicited.<sup>3</sup>

Since functional knowledge must be far more thorough than recognition knowledge, the practice must never involve so many variables in any one situation as to befuddle the student, and it must be kept up until it functions in the manner desired.

Such mechanical work is monotonous. It should never be drawn out long at a time, and it need cover only those items most likely to be necessary in simple speech. As soon as a set of inflections is trained, they should be put to work in speech, preceded or followed by previously acquired phrases that have already been trained to function as units of semi-spontaneous speech. A good initial application drill of the foregoing might be (supposing that verb forms of the present tense of the first conjugation have already been made the subject of a similar drill):

*Directions:* Match each phrase of the first column with a suitable phrase of the second column, or vice versa, and be able to read each combination as two breath groups:

Al pasar el puente	me veo en el agua
Cuando paso el puente	la veo en el agua
Cuando Juan y yo pasemos el puente	te veo en el agua
Cuando Juana y yo pasamos el puente	los veo en el agua
Cuando los chicos pasan el puente	se ve en el agua
Cuando tú pasas el puente	le veo en el agua
Cuando tú y el pasan el puente	nos vemos en el agua
Cuando tú y ella pasan el puente	os veo en el agua

*Directions:* When the instructor enunciates any one of the foregoing phrases, be ready to repeat it and add an additional oral phrase to complete it:

<sup>3</sup> Let it be mentioned again that the students are supposed to know these matters from the recognition standpoint before such systematic functional practice is taken up.

This item of conscious changing of the variable elements in a given phrase may a bit later also include a change of the invariable element for another fixed element. For example *Me veo en el espejo, en el cuadro*, etc., furnish additional drill possibilities.

Admittedly all such products are artificial constructions built up by rule of thumb. If they are overdone, or if the whole available time is given over to them, little growth in expression power may be expected; but if they alternate with other types of fixed drill that call for no such juggling of internal elements, and particularly if they are mingled with simpler patterns, a secure basis for oral development is laid.

If such drill is delayed until a recognition reading ability is acquired, each "construction" may be readily checked and appraised. There will not then be that sense of strangeness and newness in each, but instead a feeling of dim prior acquaintance.

While active drill in manipulating the variable elements involved in inflections and linguistic particles may be attained in simple questions, such a procedure is far more complicated and very much more difficult. For example, if the foregoing pronominal elements had to be taught by question and answer, the student would have to go through one more mental process. *¿Me ve en el agua?* even if it were readily understood without having to be turned into English, would have to be answered first in English "I see you in the water," which in turn would be translated to *Te veo en el agua*. Let us not delude ourselves at this point into thinking that the answer comes forth in Spanish. If such is possible, the student is too advanced to need such drill. If the process is a quick switching from English to Spanish, why not strip it of all superfluities and drill on the one changing element? Why not encourage the student to hold in mind the model *Lo veo en el agua*, which would take care of everything—word order, verb form, and accompanying fixed element—except the object personal pronoun under consideration? After practice is had in quickly arriving at the desired pronoun, question and answer is an admirable device for advanced drill work along the same lines, for it speeds up the process and thereby tends to automatize it.

The foregoing sample procedure may be adapted to other simple grammatical difficulties that trip students in their oral composition. This phase of the work is easily overdone, thus defeating its avowed purpose, which is obviously secondary to giving prac-

tice in the use of semi-spontaneous forms. The writer tends to err at this very point.

The writer has no impressive experimental results with which to corroborate the claims of this paper. In fact, he feels rather apologetic for the following results of an attempt to put the plan into practice.

The class of twenty-five members had studied Spanish by the recognition method for two quarters of twelve weeks each. Two hours a week during the spring quarter were devoted to drill in a systematic attempt to convert recognition knowledge into functional speaking ability. As might reasonably be suspected under these circumstances, the students did not learn to speak Spanish; but progress in oral facility was noted in the majority of the class, six of whom by the end of the quarter could laboriously narrate any of the simple stories under study; they could express themselves fairly fluently but usually with glaring grammatical errors. At times the instructor had to render assistance to their connected speech either in the form of questions in Spanish or by adding an obviously needed phrase. This group could reply readily to any uninvolved question on the subject matter, and could complete remarkably well partially finished statements uttered by the instructor. Another group, consisting of about half of the class could answer simple questions in Spanish, fill in needed elements in unfinished statements,<sup>4</sup> but they scored poorly in connected speech when requested to tell the story from the picture illustrating the lesson story. Six or eight of the class seemed to derive no profit whatever, by way of increased powers of expression, from the course.

The foregoing results seem more encouraging when one analyzes the factors involved.

With twenty-five students in a class the average available time for active drill was two minutes per student per recitation, which for a total of twenty-four recitations was only forty-eight minutes for the whole quarter. The few who profited little or none evidently spent just about that much time in going through the drills devised for the purpose. There was no way to force them to be active while another student was reciting, and no way to induce them actually to go through the suggested drills outside of class. The middle group apparently bestirred themselves occasionally in class enough

<sup>4</sup> This class had had rather copious drill in aural interpretation in their recognition study.

to respond vicariously while another student was reciting, and did the outside work when the mood struck them to do so. The A-group must have performed conscientiously all drill exercises as directed, before they came to class, and participated mentally in all class drills. In case they did the outside preparation of one hour a day devoted to vocally uttered efforts, they had about twenty-four hours (as against forty-eight minutes of individual class drill) of active functional practice in self-expression. If they made themselves react in class as though every question were directed to them, they had about twenty-four more hours of such drill. Under optimum conditions, the total possible time would have been about forty-eight hours devoted to training in self-expression, which is still to little to learn to speak a language.

The possible time devoted to such a course in a high-school class meeting twice a week (leaving the other three hours for parallel recognition study) during the entire second year would treble the foregoing figures and should theoretically treble the results.

A highly encouraging secondary outcome of the writer's experiment was the increased interest in the study of Spanish. Twelve of this group of twenty-five decided to major in Spanish; and all but the loafers acquired a new feeling of power in their ability to wield this new and fascinating tool of thought, which was clearly reflected in the increased zeal with which they attacked their parallel recognition study.

In short, even though the objective of the course was not accomplished as was dimly hoped for, it was worth the effort because it encouraged the students towards a goal that clearly would be attainable in the end. The limited phases of experience about which they could actually think and discourse directly, albeit imperfectly, in Spanish opened up an enchanting vista of a far wider range of application that would be theirs if they persevered.

Some of these students are going to attend a summer session at a Mexican university this summer. It will be interesting when they return to check up on their oral facility and to compare it with that of others attending the same summer school who have only gone through the period of recognition study and had an additional year's study of the old-fashioned type of reading and composition.

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## THE FUNCTIONAL INTERRELATIONSHIPS OF CERTAIN ASPECTS OF MODERN LANGUAGE LEARNING\*

*(Author's summary.*—A bewildering condition exists in this country today, as to the methods to be pursued and the aims to be attained in the teaching of the first two years of the modern foreign language courses. Conflicting points of view are held by different groups of teachers; a lack of unity results which might well prove disastrous to the professional welfare of modern foreign language teachers. Some experimental data are given which indicate that in one institution, at least, the language ability pattern develops as a whole. The need of impartial scientific experimentation is stressed throughout.)

THE educational values of modern languages as well as those of the classical languages were for a long time taken for granted. Since the introduction of the modern foreign languages into the high schools and colleges of this country, the aims have been four-fold: (1) to teach the pupil to read, (2) to understand, (3) to write, and (4) to express himself in the foreign language studied. Whether this was done by the translation, the direct, the phonetic, the psychological, and finally by the so-called grammar-translation method first evolved in the United States, all courses in the modern-foreign languages had the four objectives as their ultimate aim. No statement as to the special needs of American students of foreign languages appeared until 1898, when the famous "Report of the Committee of Twelve" was published, and pointed out the special problem of instruction confronting the American student. The chief recommendation of this Committee was that of making "reading ability" the primary objective in the study of modern foreign languages in this country. Speaking ability was put in the background. They advocated training in grammar, and in translation from English into the foreign language as aiding materially in the acquisition of this reading aim.

Various statements have appeared since 1898 as to what are or should be the objectives of modern language courses. The most important of these is that made by the Committee on Modern Languages of the National Education Association in 1914. "The most moderate achievement," comments this Committee, "must include at least the power to read an ordinary book rapidly, intelligently, and without too frequent recourse to the dictionary."

\* Delivered before the Modern Language Section of the Indiana State Teachers Association, October 20, 1932.

Various individuals have stressed different values. Handschin<sup>1</sup> lists ten different values derived from the study of foreign languages. Chief of these are: (1) Language study aids in acquiring the ability to do abstract thinking; (2) The study of French, German, or Spanish yields the power to read French, German, or Spanish. Reading is the objective of this instruction in the United States; (3) The study yields an understanding of the cultural materials of the foreign people whose language is studied; (4) It yields the ability to understand the spoken language and to speak it; (5) It yields the ability to write that language, etc. However, Handschin is careful enough to state that all these values will have to be proved by experimentation.

Emma Reinhardt<sup>2</sup> lists eighteen objectives accepted as valid by the majority of 99 teachers and principals consulted. However, of these eighteen objectives, "only one objective for the two-year course in French was accepted unanimously: ability to pronounce French with a fair degree of accuracy." Other leading objectives listed were (a) ability to read simple French without translation, (b) to write simple French, and (c) to speak and understand simple French.

Such were the main accepted objectives in the minds of most leading modern language teachers until the publication of the various reports of the Modern Foreign Language Study (1924-1927) and especially of the publication in 1929 of Volume XII by Algernon Coleman of the University of Chicago, now popularly known as the "Coleman Report," wherein are summarized the conclusions and is found a restatement of the objectives of modern language teaching.

The basic recommendation of the Coleman Report is that "a radical change in course content and class procedure" (p. 167) should be undertaken by teachers of modern languages in the first two years and that reading should be made the primary objective.

It is true that the data that Professor Coleman had at hand pointed out that "for 83 per cent of those who begin modern language in the public and private secondary school years, two years is the maximum period for the study of this subject," and that G. T. Buswell found that "the middle half of a class either in

<sup>1</sup> *Methods of Teaching Modern Languages*, World Book Company, 1923.

<sup>2</sup> *The North Central Association Quarterly*, II (1927), 332-338.



high school or in college, does not, in two years' time, reach the level of final reading maturity." It is also true that the American Council Alpha Test in French, German, and Spanish, administered all over this continent, compelled Professor Coleman to reach the conclusion that reading should be the one main objective. However, there was no definite proof at hand that one method was superior to another. The Coleman Report also implied that many teachers were spending too much time in teaching oral work that cannot be controlled instead of devoting their time wholly to the one defensible aim—the teaching of reading.

Professor Coleman recommends extensive reading; at least 600 pages should be read in the first year. "On the basis of certain experiments in extensive reading, carried on largely in college classes, but in a few high school classes as well, the Report strongly advised further experimentation along similar lines."

It is this reading technique, still in its embryonic stage, that is recommended by Coleman, which has perhaps introduced chaos and confusion into the problem of the correct methods and objectives to be pursued by the modern language teachers. We find departments, and teachers within the department, divided as to objectives, method to be followed, and the acquisition of the desired objectives.

Professor Morgan, Dr. William Price, Professor Mercier, Dr. DeSauzé and numerous other individuals have attacked the report and shown the main basic recommendation of the Report, at least to their satisfaction, to be nothing more than a mere "hypothesis." In the *Modern Language Journal*<sup>3</sup> there appeared an article signed by 87 prominent language teachers of this country against the basic recommendation of the Coleman report and outlining new objectives.

The New York State Syllabus<sup>4</sup> has also restated the objectives for the secondary schools of that state. "The aim is to lay a solid foundation in hearing, speaking, reading, and writing the foreign language, so that any later desirable special acquisition, such as a competent reading knowledge or the ability to translate the foreign language or to use it as the medium of foreign correspondence, may

<sup>3</sup> XVI, (May, 1931), 619-628.

<sup>4</sup> Modern Foreign Languages, *French Review*, No. 1931, pp. 114-140.

be built upon a permanent foundation of essential knowledge and skill."

Thus, the Coleman report has by no means unified the language teachers. A great confusion now exists among language teachers as to what can actually be attained than ever before. Even those who are for the "intensive-reading" method, like Professors Bond and Hagboldt of Chicago, Miss Eddy of Iowa, and Professor E. C. Young of Wisconsin, have different methods of attack and are not agreed as to the best possible method of attainment of the reading objective.

We find each individual teacher defending his own method as the best one to follow. Cheydleur believes in the "Eclectic-Method versus the Reading Method." Professor Bond has a method all of his own. On the other hand, Professor Bovée publishes results obtained from experimentation, presumably proving that his students are able to read and to pass the standard tests as well as Professor Bond's students who are prepared only to read French. All of these articles are under suspicion of prejudice, especially as we find them published under such titles as "My Creed" and the like, in which pure assertions are put forth as containing definite and conclusive proof of the facts. Miss Eddy, for example, sees in the Direct-Reading method, the best possible method. "Fortunately," she says, "The Direct-Reading method embodies the principle that the reading objective is not only the logical aim for a two-year course, but the best possible first goal in a longer course."<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, E. W. Bagster-Collins says: "Reading alone is an exceedingly slow way of acquiring a repetition of the common stock of words and by itself a crude, bewildering, and monotonous way for young people to learn to cope with the structural forms of the language . . . while the goal, extensive reading, is a laudable one, the writer of the Report (Coleman) by no means offers a panacea ready at hand."<sup>6</sup>

The confusion of aims and of methods of achieving them thus briefly outlined should cause grave concern to all modern language teachers. To an outsider without vested interests in the premises, there emerges the uncomfortable suspicion that the differing points of view are matters of deep conviction and high hope

<sup>5</sup> *The French Review*, October, 1931, pp. 30-46.

<sup>6</sup> *The German Quarterly*, 1930, pp. 18-27.



arrived at by a route familiar to the student of the psychology of political and religious phenomena. One has faith or one has not faith, and salvation shall be by faith, not by works. Opinions, unfounded in objective fact, but strongly buttressed by emotional tone, are put forward not as hypotheses to be tested by impartial scientific methods, but as conclusions, the validity of which is not to be questioned.

That this internecine warfare is likely in the end to prove suicidal is an hypothesis given point by the fact that two or three years ago a large Eastern institution, very similar to the one with which the authors are associated, abolished all modern language from its curriculum—not, as might be supposed, because of financial stringencies caused by a depression following an international misunderstanding which foreign language study should help make impossible, but because the administration and faculty of this institution became convinced of the essential educational futility of modern language teaching.

Whether this action was based upon demonstrably valid conclusions or not is beside the point of the present argument. That the question was raised and disposed of in this fashion should be sufficient warrant for modern language teachers to make serious efforts to compose their differences. They should, to change the figure, submit these differences to the action of the universal solvent of the scientific method in so far as this solvent is capable of being used.

That this scientific approach to these problems is a panacea for all the ills of modern language teaching is not, of course, to be understood. The aims of education are finally rooted in a philosophy of education, and such aims cannot be arrived at by the methods of science. The scientific method can, however, answer such questions as: Are the defined aims possible of achievement? If so, to what extent? If not, why not? Is this particular procedure the best of several possible ones to achieve a given aim? What is the optimum amount of curricular material for a given type of student? What is the cost in terms of society's money of achieving a given result? And so one might continue to list literally hundreds of questions, answers to which are required for the proofs that modern languages are taught effectively and in conformity with clearly defined and socially valuable aims.

The illustrative questions that have just been asked, you will note, have all been answered by someone somewhere. Many of you here have answers to all of these and many more that might be asked. These answers, however, are not for the most part such as can be characterized as scientific. They are, if you like, artistic intuitions, or the result of subjective impressions. They might all be corroborated by science—though that seems impossible in the light of the differences in points of view previously discussed—or they might in large part be shown to be based on error: idols of the street and of the den, to use Bacon's terms.

The utility of a united front merely as a matter of professional self-preservation is strikingly exemplified in your colleagues, the teachers of Latin. The representative of a large publishing house is responsible for the statement that Indiana is one of the best if not the best state in the Union from the standpoint of the profits of publishers of Latin text books. While this statement was not further verified by more painstaking research into educational statistics, there is ample evidence in a comparison of the number of teachers of Latin with that of the number of teachers of modern languages in Indiana to indicate that modern languages are by comparison curricular step-children. The proportion of Latin tests used in the State High School Testing Service as compared to the number of French tests is another such index. In the two years that the service has existed there have been sold to the high schools 19,000 Latin tests and only 1,200 French tests.

In spite of the Classical Report—which has been characterized by one eminent psychologist as a “disgraceful piece of special pleading, virtually suppressing the results of important experimental researches”<sup>7</sup>—in spite of this Report we are unconvinced that a dead language, over the very pronunciation of which the doctors themselves disagree, can offer as much of abiding educational worth as can the modern languages. On the contrary, is it our judgment that Latin owes its prominence in the curriculum to tradition and inertia, and not to demonstrated values which the authors believe inherent in living modern languages. In our view the various modern language groups could do nothing more profitable than to organize and support among themselves extended research programs, with such technical assistance as may be rendered

<sup>7</sup> Sandiford, Peter, *Educational Psychology* (Longmans Greene, 1928), p. 276.

by educational psychologists, and such financial assistance as could be obtained from our wealthy educational foundations and from university departments of modern languages for a carefully considered and clearly defined research program. In such a venture, "Einigkeit macht stark!" "L'union fait la force!"

So much by way of what have, it is to be feared, largely been *obiter dicta*. The remainder of this paper will be devoted to a résumé of the results of efforts at the application of scientific method to problems of modern language teaching at Purdue University, efforts guided largely by the philosophy of social utility to which by its charter Purdue University is committed.

Three years ago, the Department of Modern Language at Purdue in co-operation with the Division of Educational Reference launched a series of experiments to determine, if possible, the relative advantages of sectioning students on the basis of ability. Two years of experimentation were carried out. It is not our purpose here to give the results of these experiments. Indeed, they were on the whole rather ambiguous. The experiments are mentioned here merely by way of historical setting and background. It soon became evident from a series of conferences, that to obtain complete agreement on the aims of instruction as well as on methods was no easy task. The principle of "rugged individualism" was apparently in considerable favor.

To make a long story short, however, agreement was finally reached to the extent of arriving at a percentage statement of relative emphasis on the various aspects of each of the three languages taught. An illustrative list for elementary Spanish follows:

Ability to translate Spanish into English	30 per cent
Ability to translate easy sentences into Spanish	20 per cent
Knowledge of verbal forms	25 per cent
Knowledge of vocabulary	25 per cent

More important, however, from the educational psychologist's point of view was the definition of these same aims in functional terms, i.e., in terms of examination questions. It was attempted at the outset, not too aggressively, to convert the teaching staff to at least a partial use of so-called objectively scored or new-type examinations, but with no success. It was necessary, however, to have comparable test results, and examinations written and graded

by individual instructors for their own students would, as is well known, not yield such comparable results. A satisfactory plan was finally adopted at the suggestion of the Division of Educational Reference. This consisted in having each instructor contribute his proportionate share of examination questions, the joint questions of all instructors teaching a given course then being combined and administered to all students in this course at the same time, the answer of all students for all instructors to a given question being graded by one instructor. This eliminated variations in standards of judgment from one instructor to another. This plan, a by-product of the experimental procedure, worked so well that it is now being used regularly in all three languages. It obviated crimination and recrimination typified by the following sort of thing.

Instructor A formerly said to Instructor B, "This semester I have Mr. X in my class. I see from the record that you had him the first semester. You passed him when obviously you should not have done so. He is totally unprepared for the second semester's work."

Under the new scheme, each instructor has an equal share in passing or failing every student in a course taught by two or more instructors, and on this sector, at least, all is quiet on the pedagogical front.

As a consequence of this procedure, the Department now has examinations as valid as pooled judgments of the instructors can make them, and of known reliability. The determination of the reliability of examinations, as most of you know, is a technical matter, and this is done at Purdue for the Department by the Division of Educational Reference. Here for example is a section of a report sent by the Division to the Department.

Parts II and III of the final examination in German 42 are so low in reliability as to make them nearly worthless for proper placement of students. Part II will require approximately 10 to 15 times as many questions of the type employed in order to have a satisfactory degree of reliability. Part III will require from 25 to 30 times as many questions of the type used in order to place students with reasonable accuracy. Parts I and IV are satisfactory as they stand.

All five parts of the examination in Spanish 62 are reasonably reliable. The examination as a whole yielded a high degree of reliability,  $r = .953$  where 1.00 is perfect reliability.

The five parts of the examination in French 22 yielded fairly high reliability coefficients. Parts II and V were least satisfactory. The number of questions for

these two parts should be approximately doubled. The examination as a whole yielded an  $r$  of .924.

This matter of validity and reliability of tests is crucial in obtaining scientifically defensible results. For the two defective parts of the German examination just cited, for example, the instructors might about as well have saved the time of their students and of themselves as well as the expense, effort, and emotional energy involved by assigning grades on these two parts by drawing the names of students out of a hat, arbitrarily assigning H grades to the first 5 per cent, A grades to the next 20 per cent, B grades to the next 50 per cent, and so on. The examination, so far as the two parts in question were concerned, was very little more successful than such a procedure would have been in arranging the students on a scale of ability for the language abilities in question.

Not only is the problem of validity and reliability of measurements crucial in the matter of equitable grading, but it is also basic to answering all questions concerning the interrelationships of abilities whatsoever. We became interested in this problem of the interfunctioning of the various aspects of language ability, and set out to study it. Specifically, we desired answers to such questions as this: How is mastery of vocabulary related to ability to translate from the foreign language into English? From English to the foreign language? How is the mastery of verb forms related to all of these? And so on for all of the possible combinations of the various aspects of language ability as set out in the defined aims of the Department. The examinations were, of course, presumably so constructed as to measure achievement in these various language functions.

Before undertaking an investigation of this general problem, however, it was necessary to determine whether these interrelationships were functions of the individual instructors. Conceivably teaching emphasis and methods might differ so much from one instructor to another as to make an answer to the general problem impossible. It is possible, for example, that a given instructor might be an exceedingly able drill master in grammatical forms but weak in inducing his students to acquire a reasonable mastery of other aspects of a foreign language. Or he may be particularly skillful in achieving the aim of translating from English into the foreign language without at the same time having his students make

commensurate gains toward the defined aims of the department. Results of this part of the investigation are given for first-year French in Table I. The intercorrelations indicate that, when the

TABLE I  
INTERCORRELATIONS OF MEASURED ACHIEVEMENT IN FIRST-YEAR FRENCH  
FOR FOUR INSTRUCTORS

In- struc- tor	Vocabulary vs. French English Translation			Vocabulary vs. English to French Translation		English to French vs. French to English Tran.	
	*N	†r	Corrected for At- tenuation	r	Corrected for At- tenuation	r	Corrected for At- tenuation
First Semester 1931-1932							
A	28	.75	.91	.79	.90	.40	.47
B	30	.74	1. +	.84	1. +	.80	.96
C	30	.64	.97	.59	.84	.55	.63
D	47	.84	1. +	.77	1.00	.83	1. +
Second Semester 1931-1932							
A	21	.42	.68	.42	.54	.86	1. +
B	25	.57	.68	.56	.68	.84	.90
C	26	.61	1. +	.62	1. +	.82	.88
D‡							
	Vocabulary vs. Verb Forms			Verb Forms vs. French to English Translation		Verb Forms vs. English to French Translation	
	A	21	.37	.48	.84	1. +	.81
	B	25	.50	.62	.84	.90	.96
	C	26	.51	1. +	.78	.89	.89
D‡							

\* N=number of students

† r=reliability.

‡ Data not available—records lost

"raw" correlations are corrected for attenuation (i.e., for unreliability of the tests used) that there is something of a suspicion that individual instructors do exert a somewhat differential influence on the various aspects of language achievement, particularly in



the second semester, where the coefficients of correlation for Instructors A and B are quite similar to each other, but rather different from those for Instructor C. The samplings here are, of course, rather small, and hence the results need to be cautiously interpreted. On the whole we may say, however, that the language pattern tends to develop as a whole. If a student knows verb forms he will in general also be able to translate from the foreign language to English and *vice versa*. If we know that a student stood well on a vocabulary test it is a safe prediction that he will stand high also in translation and knowledge of verb forms. These tentative conclusions are, of course, limited for the present to the situation at Purdue, and are not to be assumed to apply generally. They need verification in other situations. Should they prove to be generally valid, however, it would appear that much of the controversial heat engendered about methods has been somewhat analogous to that produced by the theological arguments of the Scholastics, who argued as to the number of angels that could dance on the point of a needle, or as to whether God could make a wheel turn in two directions at the same time. The major premises of the language arguments may be faulty. Should this be found to be true, what a triumph for science as a peacemaker!

To return, however, to the achievement test data from another angle. In Table II we have medians arranged by instructors. If differences in emphasis and method affected the interrelationships of the various language aspects measured, we should expect these medians to vary accordingly. That is, the median for one language aspect for a given instructor should be high while the median for one or more of the other parts of the pattern should, for the same instructor, be low.

Such is not the case. From one semester to another and from one year to another the medians for translation, vocabulary, verb forms, etc., for a given instructor maintain a rather surprising constancy of relationship to each other and to those of the other instructors. They are either relatively high or relatively low for all language functions measured—the same story as told by the correlation studies.

Lest some one be led to jump from this statement of facts to the conclusion that we have here an unqualified measure of the effectiveness of individual teachers, let us hasten to add that this

TABLE II  
MEDIAN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT SCORES FOR VARIOUS ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE  
ARRANGED BY INSTRUCTORS

Instructor	N	Vocabulary	English to French	French to English	Verb Forms
Second Semester 1929-1930					
A	47	57.3	72.0	151.4	—
B	9	53.5	68.5	147.0	—
D	11	49.5	57.5	132.0	—
First Semester, 1931-1932					
A	28	112.4	104.5	218.0	—
B	30	105.1	80.0	219.5	—
C	30	100.3	79.3	214.5	—
D	47	99.4	75.8	207.5	—
Second Semester, 1931-1932					
A	21	75.0	54.3	149.5	55.2
B	25	70.7	48.5	135.2	48.5
C	26	67.5	43.5	120.7	40.8
D*					

\* Data not available—records lost

inference cannot be drawn from these figures without additional facts. It may well be that the students of one instructor are not comparable to those of another. Differences in student ability may have existed throughout. Interest in the foreign language and previous training are additional factors requiring control before such an inference can be drawn. There may be others, such as sex and school of enrollment in the university, that might affect such medians systematically. After all of this has been granted, however, the fact of these persistent differences remains as a major premise. The minor premises of the effects of the variables mentioned can and will be established.

In the figures given above in Tables I and II no attempt was made to measure the student's ability in oral work, nor the student's ability to speak and understand the spoken language. Oral



work was therefore not measured. This does not mean, however, that oral French was not stressed in the class-room. Each instructor was permitted to use whatever method he preferred. There was an intensive training in French pronunciation in the first three weeks by a special method devised by Professors Fotos and Cattell.<sup>8</sup>

The students passed a theoretical examination on French pronunciation after three weeks of study, but no oral examination. The results of the students' success in this knowledge of French pronunciation and his future success in the study of French will be made the subject of a future study.

In summary, the widely divergent points of view of leaders in the modern language field is such as to constitute a grave obstacle to effective modern language instruction and to professional survival. It appears that the conference method of arriving at reasonable unanimity is inadequate to the solution of the many and difficult problems involved. The thesis of our argument is that the scientific, experimental approach promises to provide the way out of these difficulties. This thesis we have supported with a few chips from our workshop. These chips, we believe, show that the quality of the timber is such that by its use there may be obtained beams for an enduring structure.

H. H. REMMERS

J. T. FOTOS

*Purdue University*

<sup>8</sup> See *Essentials of French Pronunciation* (Scribner's) 1933.

## Correspondence

To the Editor of the *Modern Language Journal*:

### DOUBLE "N" IN SPANISH

Some time ago a Spanish department of five members confessed itself puzzled over the question of double *n*, as in *dennos Vds.*, *tráigannos*, or *préstennos*. The manuals which served as the final sources of information either stated that two *n*'s were permissible only where the first was part of a prefix, as in *innegable*, *innumerable*, *innoble*, *innúmero*, or gave such examples and made no specific statement. The department felt obliged to reach a solution for the sake of consistency in correcting papers, and accordingly decided upon a single *n* for polite affirmative commands addressed to more than one person, when *nos* was to be attached to the verb as an object. They would better have reached the opposite conclusion. Not only may two *n*'s be seen used where the pronoun *nos* follows a verb in the third plural (note, along with the above *habláronnos*, a usage most likely to be found at or near the beginning of a clause or sentence), but there is no reason why the *n* which belongs to a suffix (pronouns attached enclitically are in the nature of suffixes) should not be treated in the same way as that belonging to a prefix. Manuals should state: *N* may be doubled when one *n* belongs to a prefix, or to a word attached enclitically.

RONALD B. WILLIAMS

Lake Forest College

To the Editor of the *Modern Language Journal*:

Graeco-Roman classic names, and other ancient names appearing in French form in French plays, are serious problems to American students, many of whom are only vaguely acquainted with these ancient worthies, and naturally have trouble in spelling and pronouncing their unfamiliar appellations. In their notes and introductions, editors of textbooks sometimes use the French instead of the English forms of the ancient names, and this practice is somewhat puzzling.

For example, while F. M. Warren, in his *Andromaque*, *Britannicus* and *Athalie* (1903, 1927), uses the English forms of the ancient names throughout his English notes, translating *Roboam* as Rehoboam, *Okosias* as Ahaziah, etc., Nitze and Galpin, on the other hand, in *Le Cid*, *Horace*, and *Polyeucte* (1907, 1927), merely say, in regard to the names in the last-named play: "Félix, Sévère, Pauline, Albin, and Fabian are Roman names. Polyeucte (much-wished-for, much-desired), Néarque, Stratonice, and Cléon are Greek names."

Now, is "Polyeucte" the best form for textbook and class-room English? The *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, doubtless an authority on saints' names, authorizes the form Polyeuctes; but unfortunately for editors and teachers, the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, an equally good authority on ecclesiastical words and names, presents our Saint as Polyeuctus. This variation is certainly embarrassing, and may explain why editors fail to indicate the name in either of these English forms. Further, if we do say Polyeuctes or Polyeuctus in translating, shall we not have to say also Severus, Paulina, Albinus, Fabianus, Nearchus, Stratonice (in four syllables) and Cleo? While the use of *Sévère*, etc. in English may be easier, it makes the characters seem unreal.

The practice just questioned in connection with the printing and reading of the names of the characters in *Polyeucte*, reappears in Lyons and Searles' *Eight Classic French Plays* (1932). So the student reads (p. 101): "As the curtain rises, Polyeucte appears with Nérarque who has come to conduct him to the baptism . . ." Here the student is evidently expected to pronounce the names of Polyeuctes and Nearchus as *French* names, in English text.

However, in the notes on *Andromaque*, the last-named textbook follows the better established practice of presenting the English forms of Andromache, Orestes, Pylades, etc. *Ætion* (p. 497) is an error for Eetion (Greek *Ἰέτιων*); which, I venture to conjecture, has to be pronounced [i'i/fən] in English; if not, how? This is surely a hard nut for a college student to crack. The other three names just mentioned are easier, but an indication of their pronunciation in English would be helpful to many college students.

In their notes on *Phèdre*, Lyons and Searles use the expression "their sister Aricie" (p. 555); but this should be Aricia, the other names cited in the notes being put consistently in (Roman-) English form.

Various other names in this play present orthoëpic puzzles in the classroom. Thus, some or all of the following should be marked with diacritics or transcribed: Pirithoüs, Lapithae, Proserpina, Aidoneus (add the dieresis), Cerberus (p. 571), Parcae, Atropos, Pittheus, Træzen, Hippolytus (p. 570), Antiope (p. 571), Acamas, Demophon (p. 584). So, too, the characters *Enone*, *Théramène*, *Ismène*, and *Panope* (p. 552) had better be introduced to the student in Roman-English dress, with quantitative or other diacritics.

The assumption that American college students can and will find out for themselves how to spell and pronounce properly the ancient names when translating is, in my opinion, erroneous.

C. C. RICE

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## Notes and News

THOUGHTS PROVOKED BY THE READING SYLLABUS IN MODERN LANGUAGES, an article by Daniel C. Rosenthal in the *Bulletin of High Points* of the Board of Education of New York City, should cause proponents of the reading method at least to stop and consider whether they are on absolutely safe ground. We quote from Mr. Rosenthal:

In the syllabus dealing with modern foreign languages, we have a general statement as to reading, psychological principles of readings, and their application. I am rather curious to know exactly on what basis these principles have been worked out in the matter of the study of foreign languages. I am quite willing to concede that the process here described may well apply to the teaching of pupils to read English in the lower grades of elementary school. But do these principles carry over into the teaching of reading in a foreign language? And to what extent have these very principles enabled those pupils to read English with complete comprehension, to whom we are trying to give a reading knowledge of French? I fear me that this is a pregnant question.

Our primary assumption has been that one learns a foreign language more or less in the same way that one learns one's native language. I challenge this assumption. I believe that one must draw here a clear cut distinction. The learning of one's native language is a purely natural process, beginning with early infancy when the child utters onomatopoeic sounds, and then gradually acquires a vocabulary. The child has about him, relatively speaking, innumerable teachers and it is but a step to the learning of reading, that is, the transference of sound symbols to visual symbols. . . . The learning of a foreign language, on the other hand, is not a natural process, but an artificial one. In fact, every method, be it grammatical, direct, or reading, bears out this statement. . . . With regard to the psychological principles laid down in the syllabus for modern foreign languages, we assume that the pupil is going to apply to the reading of a foreign language, principles that seem to be valid in the reading of the vernacular. This is quite impossible for the simple reason that, despite all simplification the simple basic vocabulary is bound to be lacking, the thought structure of the foreign language is fundamentally different from the structure of the vernacular, and, say what one will, this vocabulary must be acquired either by thumbing a lexicon or by constant drill. In other words, we must realize the fundamental artificiality of the process involved; we must realize that the first step in the comprehension of a foreign language is through the medium of the vernacular. I shall ask here how many of our advocates of the new reading method have learned to read a foreign language by any method other than the method described in the last statement? . . .

It is felt that a minimum of grammar should be taught, and that only recognitional grammar; that there should be an active grammar and a passive grammar. I am puzzled, however, as to this distinction. Where do we draw the line between active and passive grammar? For instance, it might be stated that it is unessential for a pupil to know that *qui* is the relative subject, and *que* the relative object of the

verb. But what is the pupil to make out of the following sentences upon a recognition basis: *Je viens de parler à l'homme que connaît votre père*. I strongly suspect that to him the *que* would be subject, and *père* object in the secondary clause. And how is a pupil to distinguish between *qu'est-ce que vous attendez?* and *qu'est-ce qui vous attend?* Upon a recognitional basis, also, what would a student of German make out of the following: *Nachts sitzt sie am Fenster und schaut hinaus*. The cognate of *schaut* is "show." What does the pupil do with *Nachts*, and how identify it? Take the expression, *es kommt darauf an*; *ankommen* means "arrive," but certainly not in this idiom. Yet this is an expression that occurs on almost any page of German. Or how will the pupil identify the direct and indirect objects in the following sentence without a thorough knowledge of grammar?—*Ich habe den Männern den Knaben anvertraut?*

I do not advocate parrot-like repetition of grammatical rules, but some knowledge of grammar a pupil must have. This knowledge can be applied in definite concrete drill sentences from English into the foreign language, drill sentences that deal with perfectly ordinary phases of life and which will drive home principles to be carried over into the reading knowledge. Again, what is the objection to translation from a foreign language into the vernacular? Isn't it possible to bring out the niceties of a foreign tongue through the niceties of one's native tongue? What harm is there in this?

At this point we might as well consider the question of cognates and word lists. There has been a tendency to place great emphasis upon these. The great difficulty with cognates is that they convince the student that the foreign language is more or less a translation of the vernacular. One of the classic examples of cognates that I know of is the sign that was displayed in Paris some years ago: *Ecole de Déportements*. Unfortunately, *déportements* means debauchery, and even conceding the wickedness of Paris, I am quite sure that the English lady who established the school had no intention of initiating her pupils in the ways of vice. As for the word lists, the result of our insistence upon them has been that we have shied in some of our readers at perfectly ordinary words like *gronder* that never offer any difficulty to any student, and have substituted words like *réprimander*, a cognate incidentally that would convey very little meaning to the average New York student; like *funérailles d'un paysan*, which means the "obsequies of a peasant," to avoid the perfectly simple word *enterrement*.

The tendency in the teaching of modern languages has been more and more to predigest such material as we offer our students. Why need we be afraid of putting some difficulties in their way? Even though the quality of our students has apparently deteriorated with the past ten years, still I cannot believe that we are teaching them to face life, to think clearly, to give them habits of work by finding them props. I fear the result is going to be intellectual rickets.

A SERIES OF HANDBOOKS FOR UNIVERSITY STUDY IN GERMANY is again being published by the *Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst*, Berlin. The handbooks are designed to give foreign students intending to come to Germany information on their special field of study and the respective institutions, as well as suggestions regarding examinations, course of study, etc.

Five pamphlets have already been issued: (1) Law; (2) Germanistics (philology, cultural and literary history, and the philosophy of language); (3) Philosophy; (4) Natural Sciences (zoological, botanical, mineralogical, and technical institutes); (5) Chemistry. For other fields of study, pamphlets are in preparation, e.g., "Medicine" is to be issued in February. When completed, the series will give the foreign student information on the entire field of university study in Germany. Copies of these pamphlets may be obtained by sending two International Reply Coupons to the *Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, Berlin C2, Schloss*.

Arthur Gibbons Bovée, of the University High School, University of Chicago, has been awarded the *Palmes Académiques*, which carries with it the title *Officier d'Académie*, in recognition of his services in the cause of French culture and civilization, his publications, and his twenty-five years of teaching.

### Neurology

With a profound sense of bereavement we record the untimely passing, on January 5, 1934, of Dwight Ingersoll Chapman, since 1930 Assistant Professor of Romance Languages in Boston University, since 1932 Chairman of the Massachusetts French Book Review Committee. Harvard Doctor, well-known textbook editor, Professor Chapman already possessed a distinguished teaching record when called by his Alma Mater. Champion in the cause of world peace, teacher of inspiring example, his death is mourned by his widow and family, by colleague, associate, friend, and by a host of his students.

DAVID MITCHELL DOUGHERTY

Dr. David Simon Blondheim, a member of the Johns Hopkins University faculty since 1917, was found dead from gas poisoning in the kitchen of his apartment, March 19. Dr. Blondheim was 49 years old and was regarded as an outstanding man in the field of medieval French and French linguistics.



## Reviews

GLIGLOIS, a French Arthurian Romance of the Thirteenth Century, edited with an introduction by *Charles H. Livingston*, Bowdoin College (Harvard Studies in Romance Languages, 8), Harvard University Press, ix+182 pp. in-8°.

Le petit roman que M. Livingston vient d'éditer a connu bien des mésaventures. Conservé dans un seul manuscrit, que l'incendie de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Turin a détruit presque complètement, il fut copié au moins deux fois, par MM. Foerster et J. Müller, et il eut cette rare malchance de n'être pas édité par le premier de ces savants, c'est-à-dire par l'homme le plus capable de se tirer avec honneur d'une tâche assez malaisée. A en juger par les transcriptions qui nous en restent, et dont le rapport est assez compliqué, le manuscrit est l'œuvre d'un scribe plutôt médiocre, originaire de l'Est de la Belgique, comme l'attestent certaines graphies: *euwe*, *fiuls*, *mainson*, *mauls*, *nous*—(liégeois *nou(k)* = *nul*), surtout l'expression *mon cuer* (642, 906) pour désigner la femme aimée (liégeois actuel *monkaer*). En revanche, des rimes comme *detrenchie: depechie*, 349; *riches: liches*, 2515 sont plutôt picardes que wallonnes; la rime *euisse: fuisse*, 519 est peu probante, car Suchier a montré que les formes en—*ewist* allaient jusqu'à la mer; enfin *al nuit* et *doinsse* (3 fois) sont d'une localisation malaisée, et peut-être de simples négligences. A ce propos, je reprocherai à l'éditeur d'avoir voulu corriger son texte de façon parfois inopportune; les rimes de 1406, 2147, 2527 doivent rester imparfaites, comme elles le sont. De façon générale, on peut admettre que l'auteur écrit plus facilement que conformément à des règles rigoureuses. C'est un bon élève de Chrétien de Troyes et de ses contemporains, sans ombre d'originalité, ni de raffinement quelconque.

Le texte, en somme, n'a pas trop souffert des dommages successifs qui l'ont conduit en Amérique. M. Livingston a réussi à en tirer le meilleur parti, sans avoir l'ambition de tout expliquer. Voici quelques menues observations:

69 *nés* (puisque M. Livingston a adopté le signe d'accentuation dans toutes ces formes, qui pouvaient fort bien s'en passer).—225 *nule maniere* = rien (d'elle). M.L. rapporte *ly* à *amours*, ce qui ne s'accorde guère avec la tradition don-juanesque de Gauvain.—298 *sq.*, la note est superflue, car la figure de style qu'on trouve ici est dans Grosse, p. 222, et ailleurs.—Les vers 395–396 doivent être ainsi corrigés: *Chertez, tu m'en verras pener, — En cest tens, d'armez a joster*. Donc: *d'armez a joster*, pour *joster a*, comparez *Erec* 2173; *Cligès*, 3721.—407 *néz*.—409 *reméz* est un mot difficile et devait figurer au glossaire; peut-être il signifie: fixé, attaché à; comparez



*Troie* 4318, 28526.—425 *droit*: aux exemples allégués de *avoir part en*, add. *Gral*, 8986 (Hilka, 7624).—470 *quil* et non *qu'il* (=qu'il lui).—488 évidemment lisez *Se say*.—776 *Ne laits*. Comparez 1040 *Se* (et non *Ne* s.p.).—778 *Ne semblant ne li en m*.—825 *Le envoie* (s. ent. à la reine).—905 corr.—*De ma mere en que m'engenra*—*Mes peres* . . . Comparez 408, 1080; *que=qui passim*.—926 *estuece*.—1197 *ne m'i*.—1348 le nom d'*Aharer* me laisse sceptique; il n'en est plus question ensuite; je lis *a l'autre gabant*.—1672-74 . . . *sans seel*.—*As enseignes de cest anel*—*Vous mande* . . . *As enseignes de=en lui montrant*; comp. 1558.—1731 *ni meist*: *ni=ne*.—1928 *l'atace*—(ou *etace*: Cmp. liégeois *atèche*=épingle).—2079 *qu'i sont v*.—2130-31 . . . *li tournoiment*,—*Quant la force vi[e]nt par de la*.—2267 *de bout* (en deux mots=tout de suite. Comp. *Erec* 858 et l'exemple donné par Godefroy).—2319-20 *que si riche oste n'i eüst*—*Nesun tout sol, qu'on i seüst*, etc.—Un point après *fist* au vers 2322.—*Idem* à la fin de 2439 et de 2481, non 2480.—2524 à 26: . . . *c'est verités*,—*Et de teus i ot par de la* (sous ent. *le firent*),—*S'il refirent bien cil de cha*.—2566-67. *En l'oilliere le consui*—*De son elme, c'est g.p.* Inversion curieuse.—2708-10—*molt li a bel samblant moustré, chou sachiés bien, li rois Artus*—*On est encontrae lui venus*: c'est un cas d'ἀπὸ κοινοῦ.—2773. *Nus nel a oï* . . . (?) sinon il neutre=*on*.

Le glossaire est insuffisant; M. Wallenskold l'a déjà noté dans les *Neuphilologische Mittheilungen* (1932, p. 260). En cas de réimpression, y ajouter *atendanche* 531; *atraire* (de bien—) 645; *baaigner* 2568; *bout* (cf. *supra*); *cors* (ses); *consillier* (se); *contraire*; *enseignes* (cf. *supra*; ici mal traduit); *estre à*; *force* (*la*—dans un sens spécial: 2131); *maniere* 225 idem; *marche* 71; *remaindre a* (cf. *supra*); *sachans* 184, 292; *sens* 122 (pour *sains* ou *sanz*=cloches); *volentés* 491; comp. *Troie* 17880, 18034—*Pane* 2 est erroné. Car il faut distinguer 1. *pane* (=penn, lat. *penna*) et 2=panne (=lat. *pannus*).

M. WILMOTTE

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JOSÉ A. BALSEIRO. *Novelistas españoles modernos*. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1933. xxii+476 pages.

Spain's most original and universal contribution to European literature in the nineteenth century is to be found in the novels written between 1850 and 1900. Professor Balseiro has done well to devote a special work, more detailed than any previously written, to Valera, Pereda, Alarcón, Galdós, Pardo Bazán, Coloma, Picón, Alas, and Palacio Valdés. (The title, it will be seen, is a trifle misleading: the reader might expect to find Blasco Ibáñez, Baroja, and Valle-Inclán.) The volume provides authoritative biographies, summaries of outstanding novels, and full bibliographies of works and criticism. Sr. Balseiro's own remarks are lively, stimulating, always intelligent, though trivial in spots. They are

reinforced by copious quotations from a wide array of other critics, in a manner which by its impartiality reminds one occasionally of the *Literary Digest*. That the author aimed to produce a student's tool and not a series of esthetic appreciations is obvious on every page, yet his investigation has often led him to considerations of a philosophic nature. There are two appendices, one of which provides a translation into Spanish of all quotations not in that language, and the other a list of important historical events from 1800 to the present. An *Índice nominal* (which might well have been extended to include book-titles) completes the necessary equipment for an amazingly well-documented volume. Intended primarily for use as a reference text in our college classes, it is adapted also for reading in Spanish-speaking countries.

Since the author's aim is very practical, one should perhaps not expect to find broad *vistas de conjunto*. The survey is particular to each author, not general. One would with difficulty follow here the development of *costumbrismo* or the different interpretations of regionalism. The individual authors are discussed with sympathy; probably Professor Balseiro is more benevolent in his judgments than a foreign critic would have been. Of Valera, Clarín, and Galdós he writes with fine understanding. Valdés is not so well interpreted. There is little perception of the inner conflict which can be traced so clearly in its progress from the early paganism, through the dolorous vacillation of *Maximina* and *La fé*, to the serene haven of faith so winningly depicted in *La alegría del capitán Ribot* and *Tristán*. The defect of over-particularism is in a way inherent in the author's plan. Of concrete, clear, up-to-date detail there is abundance, and of novel, personal opinions.

Some minor observations may be made. Professor Balseiro has excluded consideration of short stories (p. 142) and drama, a decision which hampers the treatment of Alarcón, Pardo Bazán, and Galdós. One may regret that he has stressed certain secondary works and not given more attention to Valera's richly mature *Morsamor* and Alarcón's splendid *La Alpujarra*. The novels of the last-named author are rather poorly classified. The bibliographies are quite complete, but the mere listing of writings included in the various *Obras completas* is not sufficient: I note the absence of *Ensayos dramáticos* (Santander, 1869) from Pereda's list, of *Misterio* (1903) from Pardo Bazán's, and of *El tacaño Salomón* (Feb. 2, 1916) from that of Galdós. Misprints are so few as to be negligible.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It may be worth a note to point out that Pereda's *Peñas arriba* has essentially the same theme—regeneration of a city-dweller by sane country living—as Palacio Valdés's *El idilio de un enfermo* and Eça de Queiroz's *A cidade e as serras*. . . . The actual scene of Valdés's *José* is of course the village Cudillero (cf. p. 395).

*Novelistas españoles modernos* covers its field accurately and informingly. It can be heartily recommended to students as a reference work, and to teachers as a guide leading to new paths.

S. G. MORLEY

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*Petite histoire de la civilisation française.* PIERRE MACY AND EMILE MALAKIS. New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1932. Text and exercises 221 pp.; vocabulary 45 pp.

The purpose of this little book is to give the student, with his study of French, a general knowledge of the cultural and historical background of France. The writers have made an effort to present facts in an informal narrative style, so that the book may be found suitable for use in the second term of the second year as well as in the third year of high school French, or for the intermediate year in College.

Six parts: Géographie Physique, Economique et Politique; Histoire; Littérature; Enseignement; Arts et Science; Vie de Paris et de Province.

The authors, on the whole, have fulfilled their double purpose very well; the book is full of information, yet readable; and it is provided with brief exercises which may serve at least as indications. They are a little too fond of exclamation points!! And their brand of humor smacks of the Café du Commerce at Montélimar under President Grévy (I am catching the style).

A few errata, as a token of sympathetic interest:

p. 15: *L'Indo-Chine et le Tonkin*: Tonquin is part of French Indochina.

p. 19: *sept réseaux, six privés, un d'état*: no, two: Etat and Alsace-Lorraine.

p. 31: Tribunaux: no difference between *Tribunaux Civils* and *Tribunaux Correctionnels*; *Cours d'assise* not mentioned.

p. 37: *Gaule divisée en villes rivales*. *Cités* is the traditional word, although a misleading one. The Gallic cities were tribes, not towns.

p. 39. *Empire divisé en trois royaumes: France, Germanie, Italie*: the third should be *Lotharingie*.

p. 82: "*Pendant cinq mois, les Communards se livrèrent à toutes sortes d'excès.*" *Et c'est ainsi qu'on écrit l'histoire!* At any rate, the Commune lasted two months, not five.

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ZDANOWICZ, C. D. *Four French Comedies of the Eighteenth Century*. New York: Scribner's, 1933. xxxiv+488. Price \$1.00.

There are many quite respectable texts, but few that fit exactly one niche. Here is one of the few: designed for college students, not specialists, and for a particular type of course, eighteenth century

drama, it offers in a single handy volume a minimum selection of essential material.

Plays included: Lesage: *Turcaret*; Marivaux: *Le Jeu de l'amour et du hasard*; Sedaine: *Le Philosophe sans le savoir*; Beaumarchais: *Le Barbier de Séville*. The latter is a happy choice; though more regular and less sparkling than its companion piece which was written a few years later, it is more closely allied to the purely literary developments of the time and contains less social satire. It deserves to be read more.

A general Introduction of thirty-four pages, terminating with a two-page Bibliography, traces the progress of comedy during the century. In addition, each play has a short Preface and a few specific items of reference. The notes are in an Appendix at the close of the book (pp. 465-488); they are few but pointed. There is no Vocabulary.

The length of the Introduction is a possible criticism. On the other hand, Professor Zdanowicz refrains from using more than four plays, thus avoiding the bulkiness of Professor Comfort's edition of romantic dramas which is published in the series. Surely it was a great temptation to include *Le Légataire universel* or *Le Préjugé à la mode*.

The book is uniform in appearance, binding, typographical clearness, and accuracy, with others of the Modern Student's Library which lists such editions of merit as Ashton's *Princesse de Clèves*, Landré's *Manon Lescaut*, Dean Gauss' *Madame Bovary*, Hazard's *Le Rouge et le Noir*, etc. This volume should add considerably to the prestige of the collection.

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*School Broadcasting*. League of Nations Intellectual Cooperation Series. Paris: International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation, 1933. 210 pp. (Available in U. S. at World Peace Foundation, 40 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Massachusetts. Price \$2.)

The first and shorter part of this book gives a rather condensed and concentrated summary of practices in school broadcasting. The second part presents excerpts from the individual reports made for each of twenty-five countries. The whole is the result of a comprehensive inquiry undertaken by the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation into the educational aspects of radio. Reports were solicited from authorities in various countries. This volume represents the composite picture of the opinions of these authorities. Where necessary, minority reports are introduced.

After a great deal of information concerning present practices in any endeavor is assembled, there are two ways of reporting this information. One way is to present it so that the publication ad-

heres closely to the original reports and becomes a source book for information on the subject. The other way is to combine the divergent views and present a concrete picture of best practices as exemplified by some one person carrying them out. This last type of report, in the case of school broadcasting, might be used as a manual by teachers hearing broadcasts in their school rooms and by broadcasters in preparing broadcasts for the school room. The book, *School Broadcasting*, as it stands, fulfills well the purpose of the first method of reporting. It is an excellent source of information on the practices in the different countries. But in its summary which constitutes the first part of the book, the report includes perhaps too much and emphasizes perhaps too little. It includes too many generalizations and too few specific illustrations. The report suggests that the teacher induce pupils "to take an active part" in listening to language broadcasts in the classroom. How is a particular teacher to do this?

This book is very valuable and well worth studying but the classroom teacher will probably wish that there were several "case histories" given, showing what she should actually do in making the best use of a foreign language broadcast. This criticism, however, in no way detracts from the use of the book as an authoritative compilation of present-day opinion on the use and methods of school broadcasting. Since in Europe the broadcasting of foreign language lessons is especially important, more is included on this subject than on any other single broadcast school subject.

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